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# THE INDIAN LITERATURES OF TODAY

A SYMPOSIUM



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## A SYMPOSIUM

Essays Presented at Jaipur, October 20th-22nd, 1945

THE ALL-INDIA WRITERS' CONFERENCE

Organised by

THE ALL-INDIA CENTRE OF THE P. E. N.

EDITED BY BHARATAN KUMARAPPA, M.A., B.D., PH.D.

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## EDITOR'S NOTE

It would have been well in a symposium such as this if the same general outline had been followed by all the authors. This would have ensured uniformity of treatment which would have enabled the reader to compare adequately developments in one language with those in another. As it happened, the authors prepared their reports independently of each other and submitted them at the P. E. N. Conference at Jaipur last year, and all that the editor could do was to touch up the language and put them together for publication. Non-English words, which are not names of books or authors, are explained in brackets or in foot-notes.

Owing to difficulty in obtaining the necessary paper quota, it was not possible to publish this symposium earlier.

26-II-'46.

BHARATAN KUMARAPPA

## FOREWORD

The First All-India Writers' Conference, held under the auspices of the P. E. N. All-India Centre from October 20th-22nd, 1945, met at Jaipur on the gracious invitation of His Highness the Maharaja of that State. To his generous hospitality, to the unfailing sympathy and co-operation of his Prime Minister, Sir Mirza Ismail, and to the energetic and thoughtful Reception Committee, must go our grateful thanks and much of the credit for the success of the Conference.

That it was a success none who attended it could doubt, It marked a long step towards the mutual understanding between the writers of the country which is so vitally important for national unity. And it did more than only to promote friendly relations between writers from different language areas. It brought home to them also to what a large extent they share a common background and a common hope.

Some of the country's greatest minds were brought to bear upon the several topics chosen for discussion at the Conference and the effect of course was stimulating and sometimes inspiring. The President of the P. E. N. All-India Centre, Shrimati Sarojini Naidu, presided with her invariable graciousness and charm. Two of our Vice-Presidents, Sir S. Radhakrishnan and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, and other prominent Indian writers shared the dais with such distinguished foreign Delegates as Mr. Hermon Ould, the International Secretary of our world organisation of leading writers and editors, and Mr. E. M. Forster from England and Dr. Olivier LaCombe, Cultural Attaché of the French Consulate in India.

By common agreement, one of the most valuable features of the Conference was the Symposium on the Modern Indian Literatures, in which the sixteen addresses which we bring together here were given by as many representatives of leading languages of modern India. The value of making these

addresses a matter of permanent record is obvious to any lover of Indian culture. And their presentation in book form should serve two purposes. It should make Indians in the several language areas better acquainted with each other's literary achievements and more sympathetic with each other through the understanding that to a great extent the problems of one Indian literature are common to them all. And the composite picture that it furnishes should also serve as an introduction of modern Indian literature to the larger world of letters. A renaissance has been taking place in modern India under the impact of the literatures of the West. And of that renaissance the world in general is lamentably ignorant.

Dr. Bharatan Kumarappa, our fellow-member of the P. E. N. who has edited the volume for us, has expressed in his "Editor's Note" the regret which we share only up to a point, that a uniform pattern has not been followed by the several speakers. For what the presentation for that reason lacks in structural unity it gains perhaps in spontaneity and freshness of approach. We offer not a *pot-pourri* but a bouquet of living flowers, fragrant and fresh, to bear their witness to the gardens where they have sprung.

Of necessity, the treatment in no case is full. For a more exhaustive treatment we must invite attention to the series of P. E. N. Books on the Indian Literatures which we are publishing and of which four, *Assamese Literature*, *Bengali Literature*, *Indo-Anglian Literature* and *Telugu Literature*, have so far appeared and for current developments to the pages of the monthly *Indian P. E. N.* We hope that readers will kindly overlook the shortcomings of this very first attempt of its kind to bring together in a single volume so many of the Indian language literatures in outline sketch. Such as the book is, we offer it upon the altar of our Mother-land and of the universal brotherhood of man.

SOPHIA WADIA

## CONTENTS

	PAGE
<b>Editor's Note</b>	v
<b>Foreword by Sophia Wadia</b>	vi-vii
<b>Introductory Address by Prof. M. D. Altekar</b>	ix-x
1. Assamese— <i>By Nilmoni Phookan</i> .. .. ..	1
2. Bengali— <i>By Kazi Abdul Wadud</i> .. .. ..	11
3. English— <i>By N. K. Sidhanta</i> .. .. ..	24
4. Gujarati— <i>By Jayantkrishna H. Dave</i> .. .. ..	29
5. Hindi— <i>By Ram Kumar Varma</i> .. .. ..	41
6. Kannada— <i>By V. K. Gokak</i> .. .. ..	52
7. Maithili— <i>By Umesha Mishra</i> .. .. ..	71
8. Malayalam— <i>By C. Kunhan Raja</i> .. .. ..	88
9. Marathi— <i>By M. D. Altekar</i> .. .. ..	105
10. Oriya— <i>By Kalindi Charan Panigrahi</i> .. .. ..	113
11. Punjabi— <i>By Madan Gopal</i> .. .. ..	124
12. Sanskrit— <i>By R. N. Dandekar</i> .. .. ..	132
13. Sindhi— <i>By Lalchand A. Jagtiani</i> .. .. ..	144
14. Tamil— <i>By M. R. Jambunathan</i> .. .. ..	153
15. Telugu— <i>By C. Narayana Rao</i> .. .. ..	161
16. Urdu— <i>By Rashid Ahmed Siddiqi</i> .. .. ..	173

## INTRODUCTORY ADDRESS

By Prof. M. D. ALTEKAR, M. A., of Wilson College, Bombay,  
Honorary Secretary-Treasurer of the  
P. E. N. All-India Centre

Madam President, Ladies and Gentlemen,

By way of introduction I have only to say one or two words. One of the ideals of the P. E. N. is to bring together authors in all languages and thus to increase good-will and unity among the people. At this Conference most of the languages in India are represented. In this very symposium which will begin now there will be short speeches on the progress of literature during the present century in sixteen languages. We must know each other better ; the P. E. N. is a platform to enable writers in different languages in this country to know each other and this symposium has been arranged with that in view. It very often happens that we do not know many of the languages ; we do not know what is the progress of thought in those different literatures ; and that is one of the reasons why we do not know each other very well. Sometimes we think we know the English people better than the people nearer home. The best way to know people nearer home is to know their literatures, because in literature are embodied the best thoughts and aspirations of the people.

There is another thing : We speak in different languages and, whatever efforts we may make, that situation is going to remain. To approach the masses we have to go to them through their own language, for, whatever may be the common language of India, that common language will not reach the whole of the population. Therefore the development of the Indian literatures is an important thing, because through that development the vast masses of this country

can be brought to know modern progress and modern civilisation. You cannot hope to carry it through English or any other language to every one of them and therefore whatever may be the necessity, and there is a great necessity, for a common language for India ( we are quarrelling about that as we are quarrelling about many other things ), the necessity for the Indian languages to develop and to progress remains absolutely unaffected.

By listening to these speeches we shall know something about the progress that is taking place in each of the languages of this country. We have made as exhaustive a list as possible and I hope and feel certain that, as years roll by, more and more languages will be added to this list. India is a land of many tongues, but India is a land that rests on the same foundations. There is a great deal of diversity but in humanity there is bound to be diversity. We need not despair of unity because there is apparent diversity. Our President has told us just now that she is an optimist. Let us follow her lead in this matter and we need not despair with regard to the ultimate unity of this country.

Before I close I have to remove an unfortunate misunderstanding. It was reported in certain papers that Urdu had been omitted from this symposium. This symposium has been arranged alphabetically. We cannot help the English alphabet. We did not make it. According to the order of the alphabet, Urdu, which begins with " U," comes last. We have no language which begins with " Z " and so " U " comes last. Probably those people who gave out the news that Urdu had been omitted did not look at the whole thing, but you have your programme in your hands and you know very well that there is Urdu in it. We respect Urdu as much as every other language in this country and by means of these symposiums provided by the P. E. N. platform I am quite sure that we shall know each other's languages better and lay the foundation in this non-political conference of the unity in India which politics have failed to achieve so far.

M. D. ALTEKAR

## I. ASSAMESE

BY NILMONI PHOOKAN

Appropriately Assamese Literature was presented at the Conference by the President of the Assam Sahitya Sabha. Shri Nilmoni Phookan is an Assamese poet and critic and the former editor of a daily and of other journals in that language.

\* \* \*

“ Assamese is essentially a national product. It always has been national and it is still. The genius of the people has led it along lines of its own ; and its chief glory—history—is a branch of study almost unknown to the indigenous literature of Bengal. Whether the nation has made the literature or the literature the nation, I know not ; but as a matter of fact, both have been for centuries and are still in vigorous existence.” These are the remarks of Dr. Grierson and no truer picture could have been presented by him. It is a historical fact that many races, at one time or other, ruled Assam or ancient Kamrup, but they were all conquered by Assamese culture, language and literature.

It is said that the language and literature of a country take the character of its people. If so, Assamese language and literature must reveal a character all its own, for pure pre-Vedic Aryan stock as well as mixtures with every variety of non-Aryan people, and also pure non-Aryan stock constitute the present Assamese people. Their diverse racial and cultural traits are reflected in Assamese language and literature. But at the same time, in a true sense, it may also be said that Assamese literature has helped to evolve a unitary culture by moulding all the heterogeneous elements in the province into one organic whole known as the Assamese people. So it is indeed difficult to say “ whether

the nation has made the literature or the literature the nation."

Assamese is one of the earliest developed indigenous languages of India. In his presidential address to the Assam Students' Conference, Sir P. C. Roy said " Assamese prose literature developed to a stage in the far distant sixteenth century, which no other literature of the world reached except the writings of Hooker and Latimer in England." He further added, " The *Katha Gita* shows clearly that Assamese literature developed to a standard in the sixteenth century which the Bengali language reached only in the time of Iswarchandra and Bankimchandra," *i. e.*, the late nineteenth century.

This clearly indicates that Assamese prose literature must have begun to develop some centuries earlier to have been able to result in such advanced prose in the sixteenth century. In the early part of the seventh century, Hieun Tsang found the language of Kamrup a little different from Magadhi Prakrit of mid-India. Possibly, Assamese language took a definite shape by that time and became distinct from its parent stock.

The genius of the people in the domain of poetry was also revealed as early as the sixth or seventh century in their nursery rhymes, pastoral ballads, and love songs which were unsurpassed in lyrical pathos. The poetic diction and literary excellence found in the writings of thirteenth-century poets like Hem Saraswati and others lead one to believe that Assamese poetry must have attained the dignity of well-defined literature as early as the tenth or eleventh century.

The development of Assamese language and literature reached its zenith in the sixteenth century, when the genius of Sri Sankardev, one of the greatest Vaishnavite reformers of the time, and his disciple, Sri Madhobdev, built up a school of Vaishnavite literature and arts unparalleled in the annals of contemporary Vaishnavism in any part of India. This school developed many ramifications under the patronage of the Koch King Naranarayan. Its period extended up to the middle of the seventeenth century.

The genius of Sri Sankardev and Madhobdev paved the way for creating a high-class Assamese literature through

excellent translations of the classics. The translations were as good as their originals in their new Assamese garb, so much so, that they in their turn have become classical to modern Assamese writers.

If Vaishnavite literature was the chief product of the Golden Age of Assamese literature under the patronage of the Koch Kings, it was left to the writers of the Ahom period to develop similarly Tantric and Pauranic literature in Assamese under the patronage of the Ahom Kings. The Ahom Kings from the very beginning of their rule were great patrons of history. So the *Buranjis*, or chronicles that were written under their patronage, gave rise to a unique class of historical literature which had much to do with the development of modern Assamese prose. They supplied material for Assamese historical dramas, novels, biographies and critical literature.

Mahomedan rulers were patrons of Bengali literature. So, when the greater part of present North-East Bengal, which formed part of the ancient kingdom of Kamrup, was ceded to the Nawabs of Bengal, the court-patronised Bengali language and literature took the place of Assamese in those regions, and Assamese was ultimately banished from there. Again, the whole of the eighteenth century was a period of gradual decline of Ahom Rule, due to court intrigue. The Mayamaria Rebellion which was a sort of religious civil war invited Burmese invasions which ultimately culminated in the establishment of British Rule in 1826. Such a period was anything but conducive to the growth of art and literature. British rule put further hurdles in the way by introducing Bengali in courts and schools. The result was that the standard prose style, in which the *Katha Gita* was written in 1600, was not allowed till 1873 to be used in writing the First Primers for school children, and even this after an agitation for nearly half a century initiated by the great Ananda Ram Dhekial Phookan and assisted by the Baptist Mission.

After a glorious past followed, as we have seen, by a period of decadence, modern Assamese literature came into being, practically from 1889, the year in which *Jonaki* ( Moonlight ), a monthly magazine, saw the light of day.

A contributory cause of this renaissance was impact with Western culture and science which brought fresh light to the groping mind of the people, though in its dazzle, it tended to destroy their power of inner vision. At any rate, it widened their intellectual horizon. Christian missionaries in the early part of the nineteenth century opened a new vista for Assamese language and literature. Their aim was of course to spread their religion through literature written in the language of the people. With this end in view they established a printing-press, started the first Assamese newspaper, *Aronodoya* (The Dawn), wrote an Anglo-Assamese Dictionary, started primary schools, translated the Bible, some parables and moral stories into Assamese, and thus created opportunities for the development of Assamese language and literature. Ananda Ram Dhekial Phookan, who is aptly called the Raja Ram Mohan Roy of Assam, was the first to take advantage of missionary endeavour in this regard and to give a new impetus to the movement which has resulted in modern Assamese language and literature.

The Romantic Revival in English literature which had begun at this time to influence the writers of Bengal fired the imagination of a band of Assamese youths also, studying then in Calcutta colleges. They came into direct contact with English and Bengali literatures. The result was the starting of the *Jonaki*, and the establishment of a "Society for the Improvement of Assamese Language and Literature." A wave of Western culture took Assamese literature off its traditional moorings and landed it in hitherto unexplored regions and gave it a new lease of life. Instead of eternally drawing on classicism, the mind became athirst for a perennial spring of Idealism wherein to plunge for tonic effect. This new intoxication brought in its train not only new dreams but also oblivion of the past. The aspiring mind spread its wings in all directions and, though for some time it felt its way in the dark, it never lost sight of life in its totality. The writers of this period desired to establish a new human relationship through literature and art, and to blend Eastern and Western cultures. The literature of the West, which emphasised emancipation of the mind from every kind of thraldom, influenced their writings both consciously and

unconsciously. Much labour may have been wasted on experiments along unexplored ways, but even that loss must be reckoned as gain. Some of the literary attempts of this period may be looked upon with disfavour today, yet their value as an aid to the growth of twentieth-century Assamese literature cannot be underrated.

For the new band of Assamese writers of this period, who were wavering between the old Vaishnavite literature of abiding interest and the new Assamese Christian literature of the nineteenth century, it was not very easy to chalk out a clear path. But they felt very strongly that secularisation of literature, which till then had been purely religious, was the clarion call of the time, and that literature must reflect nature and human feelings, and take its colour from them. Also, literature that brought social and political revolution in the West, and foreshadowed change in the Indian way of life because of contact with Western civilisation, naturally left their indelible impress on the new generation of Assamese youths, who had been greatly attracted by modern trends in Western literature. How far these writers succeeded in their attempt to secularise Assamese literature does not matter, but the tendencies which they created in modern Assamese literature were of the highest value. Judged by this criterion, the growth of Assamese literature during the period was not disappointing. It decidedly helped the people to regain their self-consciousness from the mental stupor into which they had fallen during the decadent period of Ahom Rule. Had there been sustained effort in this direction, growth would have been much greater and fruits abundant.

The renaissance that had its inception in the metropolis of Calcutta could not sway the mass mind from such a distance. It is chiefly to the credit of the "Trio" of the *Jonaki* school—Lakshminath Bez Baruah, Chandrakumar Agarwalla, and Hemchandra Goswami—that, in spite of the barrier of distance, the new school inspired Assamese writers to devote some of their time and energy to the cause of Assamese language and literature. A literary sense began to grow, if not a literary class wholly devoted to it. There was no leisured class in Assam who could have pursued literature as a pastime. However, this band of pioneers formed themselves

into a sort of "Friends in Council" and Lakshminath became its central figure, subsequently an institution in himself. They felt the want, conceived the ideas, and produced the literature which the spirit of the time required of them. Poetry, drama, novel, story, ballad, translation from the classics, topical essay, text-book, newspaper, magazine, all found their way into Assamese literature through their effort. By then, many printing-presses were established in Assam, and a few publishers took to publishing books as a business.

Romanticism was the chief feature of the writings of this period. In poetry, lyrics took the place of didactics. For the first time poets like Raghunath Chowdhury saw a "spirit in the wood," and the flora and the fungi of the place had a message for them and could reciprocate their feelings. Personal touch and human yearnings found expression, but they were still to kindle the heart of the people who are ultimately the repositories of these productions. Prose took a definite shape at this time in the hands of Lakshminath, Satyanath, Padmanath, Hemchandra and a few others.

The versatile genius of Lakshminath breathed new life into Assamese literature. There was hardly a subject which his pen did not touch and embellish. He had an extraordinary fund of humour. Every trait in Assamese character was reflected in his writings, as if in a mirror. On all of them there is an impress of his compelling personality. He wrote for young and old, rustic and cultured. He exposed social follies, and extolled good traits in national character. Love of one's own country and of men shines through his writings. No subject was too trivial for him. A thin veil always separates the ludicrous from the sublime in his works. His comedy often verges on tragedy. His sonnets, poems, ballads, historical novels, short stories, dramas, criticisms, humorous sketches, satires, all contributed to the founding of the modern school of Assamese literature. Though he was thus one of the high priests of modern Assamese, no one ransacked so thoroughly as he the Vaishnavite literature of the sixteenth century to obtain from it a living inspiration to breathe into modern Assamese literature. At the same time, he looked into the depth of classical literature with a critical eye.

Chandrakumar Agarwalla was the moving spirit behind the *Jonaki* school of thought. He was chiefly a romantic poet. His thoughts were deep and mystic, and his expression elegant, at the same time simple and colloquial, carrying one from the region of words to the region of significance, giving inner meaning to every word. He was a worshipper of Man and the Spirit behind Nature. He poised his thoughts on an ideal plane, which was hardly visible to the naked eye. His sensitive soul could not bear public gaze. All these traits of his character were also visible in his measured and weighed writings. Intensity rather than extensity was the characteristic of his literary life.

Hemchandra Goswami was a lifelong devotee of Assamese language and literature. His contribution to Assamese literature is immense. His lyrical poems, indicating his throbbing heart, find an easy echo in the reader. His Assamese sonnets are of a high order. His prose writings are models of chaste and elegant Assamese. He was a voluminous writer. Though a high priest of the new romanticism in Assamese literature, his subsequent literary activities turned towards the definite objective of providing a solid background for the development of Assamese literature. He was entrusted with the work of editing the *Hem-Kosh*, an Assamese etymological Dictionary written by Hemchandra Boruah. This he did creditably. His monumental work—*Assamiya Sahityar Chaneki* or Typical Selections from Assamese Literature, in several volumes published by the Calcutta University, be-speaks his knowledge, capacity for labour, tenacity of purpose, and a quickly grasping, directive mind. Later, he took up research work in the field of old Assamese *pathies* (manuscripts) and made a good collection of these for the Kamrup Anusadhan Samiti with a descriptive catalogue.

The gospel of the renaissance preached by this "Trinity" of Assamese literature created a new faith in the rising generation of Assamese literary men, and filled them with devotional zeal to serve their literature and art. It is not to be thought that there was no other contemporary or preceding votary of Assamese literature who contributed to this renaissance. But it was this "Trio" which formed the "Tribeni"\*\*

\* Where three rivers meet.

and other devotees with equal faith plunged into it.

The patriotic poems of Kamalakanta and Ambicagiri burn with a flame never to be extinguished. Others also have written similar poems but not, I believe, with the same intensity of feeling. Hiteswar Barborooah's poems were mostly sonnets, virile in conception and bold in treatment. Nalinibala Devi's poems are mystic and full of pathos. Within the limited space at my disposal, it will not be possible to mention the names of all the other poets of this generation who have contributed extensively to modern Assamese poetry. But they were not able to free themselves from the Idealism of their predecessors, and to make the actualities of life the theme of their poetry. There is, however, a conscious effort in this direction which may take definite shape in the near future.

Rajanikanta, like Bankimchandra in Bengal, though a Government servant, found time to write novels bearing on the social life of the people. His novels provide a historical background and depict characters in flesh and blood, free from morbid sentimentalism, and in a natural environment. Padmanath also wrote social novels of outstanding merit. A new generation is in the making, and a few novelists of note may soon rise from among them.

Besides Lakshminath, Padmanath Gohain Barooah, Hiteswar Barborooah, Durgaprasad Majumdar Barooah, Chandradhar Boruah, Sarat Chandra Goswami, Atul Chandra Hazarika, Nakul Chandra Bhuyan, and Paziruddin Ahmed, and many others have written dramas, historical, social and mythological, which have contributed much to Assamese literature of the present century. Satyanath Bora was first in the field of essay-writing and desired thus to set up a standard for prose-writing. Since then a number of such prose writings have appeared.

After the birth of *Banhi*, about 30 Assamese newspapers and journals came into existence but many disappeared, each contributing in a measure to the growth of Assamese literature through stirring up mass consciousness and a feeling of loyalty towards Assamese literature. *Banhi*, *Alochani*, *Assamiya*, *Dainik Batori*, *Awahan*, may be mentioned in this connection. Students' magazines relating to college and

school activities as well as the Assam Chatra Sammilan (the Assam Students' Conference) have created a taste for literary activities among students. *Sadhana*, a magazine of the Muslim Students' Conference, has developed an enthusiasm for Assamese literature among Mahomedan students. As a result of this a number of Mahomedan writers have sprung up amongst the younger generation. *Jnanmalini* of Moulvi Mafizuddin Hazarika : a translation of the *Koraan* by Khan Bahadur Ataur Rahman, and *Islam Jcuti* ( Beauties of Islam ) by Khan Bahadur Faizuddin Ahmed are outstanding pieces of Assamese literature. Dr. Mohidul Islam Bora obtained his doctorate on a thesis showing the historical connection of Persian literature with Assamese.

Due to the untiring zeal of Knaklal Baruah and Hemchandra Goswami, the Kamrup Anusadhan Samiti ( a research society ) has grown into importance. Another Historical Research Society is being run by Government under the able direction of Dr. S. K. Bhuyan. The museum at Gauhati has given much food for reflection to research scholars. The Assam Sahitya Sabha is undertaking to publish useful books. In the present century, Dr. Bhuyan and Dr. Kakoty have written doctorate theses on Assamese history and on Assamese language and literature. Kaliram Medhi wrote a voluminous grammar in Assamese. Dimbeswar Neog, Harmohan Das, Birinchi Coomer Barwa, and Rajmohan Nath are doing systematic research in Assamese.

On the whole, the output of Assamese literature in this century is not disappointing. If anything, it is decidedly hopeful. Though no books worth the name on scientific, economic, social, political subjects have appeared, and no special series for children or for the masses have been produced, the new generation of writers have of late directed their attention to it.

In spite of all efforts to make Assamese literature worthy of the age, the genius of the people has not yet found full expression in their literature. The attention of the educated classes has been directed to political work for more than quarter of a century. It is only recently that they have realised that the country's literature has much to do with political salvation also, and that the international outlook

and peaceful relations between nations can be brought about and maintained through literature of outstanding merit. A number of progressive writers have made an effort towards producing progressive literature suitable for modern life and environment. But a clearer vision and greater sustained effort are required.

## 2. BENGALI

By KAZI ABDUL WADUD

Kazi Abdul Wadud, Reader and Secretary of the Bengal Textbook Committee in the Office of Public Instruction (Bengal), ranks high among the numerous Muslim writers of distinction in Bengali. His works in that language include *Rabindra-Kavya Path*, *Samaj O Sahitya* and *Path O Bipath*.

\* \* \*

On me has fallen the task of sketching the story of modern Bengali literature, especially during the last fifty years. But the modern era of Bengal is a little longer than fifty years. And without reference to it, a proper understanding of contemporary Bengali life and, in particular, of contemporary Bengali literature will be impossible.

Bengal in the older days had a literature neither meagre nor immature. The story of that literature has been well told by Mr. Annada Sankar Ray and Mrs. Lila Ray in the booklet that the P. E. N. has published.\* But the new literature that was born in Bengal in the 19th century has a distinction all its own, from more than one point of view. The profundities of love entranced the Bengali mind of old; the joy of exploring the World-Mind has stirred the Bengali mind of the new era.

That Bengal in the 19th century experienced an awakening comparable to the European Renaissance is a fact known even to people outside the Province. But they may have no detailed knowledge of it; nor have many Bengalees for that matter. It was indeed a renaissance, nothing short of a new birth, that happened to Bengal in the 19th century, the impress of which modern Bengali literature is proud to bear. As with the European Renaissance, a variety of influ-

ences went into the making of the Bengali one—the protracted clash and communion of Hindu and Muslim civilisation and culture, the French Revolution, Christianity, English literature, and so on. Of the many operative factors, there are two that stand out: one is the novelty-seeking Bengali mind; the other, the New Humanism of Europe of the early 19th century. Bengal is an alluvial land. Alluvial too is the Bengali mind. In Buddhist times Bengalees turned Buddhists; it is a historical fact that Bengal was the birth-place of some noted Buddhist preachers. There is proof too in early Bengali literature that, at a later time, newly arrived Islam was received with some gusto by the Bengalee by way of a reaction to the Hindu-Buddhist conflict. If such is the Bengali mind, it could not fail to be attracted by the New Humanism of Europe.

This new Bengal had its mentor in Raja Ram Mohan Roy. As a matter of fact, Ram Mohan Roy is the mentor not merely of New Bengal but of New India as well. The French savant, Romain Rolland, has even placed him among the creators of the modern world. In whichever way he is viewed, this Ram Mohan was a marvellous personality. The introspective depth of the Hindu mind, the sturdy practicality of Islam, and the charity of the Christian found a unique synthesis in Raja Ram Mohan. It was indeed a good fortune that the Bengali and the Indian of the modern era should have found a guide like him. It is a pity, however, that the gain has been more historical than psychical. If Ram Mohan's lead had been properly imbibed by the Indian mind, many a knotty problem that troubles India today would have been solved long ago.

The Renaissance of Bengal worked itself out along three main channels. The first, deriving from Raja Ram Mohan Roy, took shape in the Brahmo-Samaj movement; the second derived from the Hindu College through that rationalist and lover of India, Henry Vivian Derozio; the third is the neo-Hindu revival represented by Bankimchandra, Ramkrishna and Vivekananda. Each of these three phases was marked by the appearance of a large number of active workers. I do not have time today to speak about them in detail. I can only point out that they were not always aware of the signif-

icance and possibilities of their particular line of work in the context of national life. The result has been both a gain and a loss for Bengal. While on the one hand the Bengali mind has gained in depth and refinement, on the other it has developed a perplexing complexity. In fact, one main problem that faces us in Bengal today is how to resolve the complication and find out an easy and broad path of action. I am glad to record that the process of resolution has already started.

Though this renaissance of Bengal started almost at the beginning of the nineteenth century, it took about fifty years to find a worthy expression in literature. In the years immediately following the death of Raja Ram Mohan Roy, certain leaders of the Brahmo-Samaj movement created a literature that retains its distinction even today. But the specifically modern literature of Bengal—modern both in form and in substance—did not emerge till the middle of the century ; it came along that channel of the Bengali renaissance which derives from the Hindu College. The founder of this new Bengali literature was that darling of Bengal, the ill-starred Michael Madhusudan Datta. For long did he dream of fame through the writing of English verse. It was perhaps this dream that drove him to Christianity. Many of his countrymen have sighed over his apostasy. But, however deplorable it might have been on his personal account, it turned out to be fortunate for his nation. It was after his conversion that he made his acquaintance, through Christian missionaries, with Hebrew, Greek, Latin, Italian and other such languages and literatures ; and the fact that he was able to give his country a new literature was due to his intimate acquaintance with these languages and literatures. Madhusudan was able to win the regard of his countrymen in his lifetime, but it is only lately that his full greatness as a writer is being realised. With a deep feeling for his own people he combines an equally deep feeling for humanity ; he holds aloft the dignity of man above the frowns of gods and fates ; his power over words places him in the very front rank of artists ; in the qualities of the heart, he is a prince. The output of this comparatively short-lived poet is not quite proportionate to the genius he was born

with ; but this is precisely what renders him a perpetual marvel to his readers. Ram Mohan gave the nation the lead of a manly intellect and a virile humanity ; Madhusudan gave them a taste of the joy of the heart reaching out to the universe.

After Madhusudan came a number of Bengali poets of considerable power, some of whom were as famous in their time as Madhusudan himself. But in the march of time, the less known among them have emerged to the fore while the known ones have fallen back. The really worthy ones among the post-Madhusudanites turned away from the grand manner of Madhusudan to the native Bengali manner, easy, familiar, simple-timbred, and thus prepared the way for Rabindranath, who, in manner, belongs to the native tradition of the Bengali lyric but attains to epic grandeur in the sweep and expanse of his mind.

The literary king of Bengal after Madhusudan was Bankimchandra. That he was endowed with a remarkable literary genius is undeniable. But the wonderful influence he wielded in his time was due not so much to his literary genius as to his intellectual leadership : he is the accredited spokesman of Neo-Hinduism. Attempts at a fresh appraisal of Bankimchandra are being made in recent times. The modern critic of Bankimchandra finds no basis for the charge against him of anti-Muslim spite. For one thing, he has created some beautiful Muslim characters ; for another, as a socialist, he championed the cause of the have-nots against the haves, irrespective of race or creed. What the modern critic discerns in Bankimchandra is a split personality. On the one hand, there are his eager quest after truth and his inborn love of humanity ; on the other is his concern, rather inordinate, for his oppressed and bewildered community. It is this last which stands in the way of a definite place for Bankimchandra in the ranks of the great leaders of modern India. But his literary greatness is indisputable, all shortcomings notwithstanding. With a profound knowledge of the human mind he unites a remarkable power of delineation of character. His pictures of the human heart, divided against itself, at times recall those of Shakespeare. There is a striking affinity between Bankimchandra and Iqbal, the

poet of North-Western India. Both are brilliant in their expression ; both hazy in their thinking ; yet both influenced their times mainly as leaders of thought.

Bankimchandra's immediate disciples did not fully realise the uniqueness of his literary powers. Perhaps that is why so few among them can boast of any literary talent worth the name. All that they did was to take up the tune of their master and fill the skies of Bengal with hallelujahs of *Hindutva*—the ballyhoo was specially marked on the stage—but in the field of literature they were a decided failure. Literature is the product of the rapture or anguish of expression ; ostentation is always fatal to it.

His own literary genius enabled Bankim to sense the promise of young Rabindranath, whose appearance he greeted enthusiastically. Rabindranath was son of a reformer of the Hindu religion, whose remarkable personality made an abiding impression on the poet and was a perpetual source of inspiration to him. In his recently published letters Rabindranath shows, even as a young man, a deep awareness of life, which must have been due in a very large measure to the influence of his father. The same influence would naturally induce in Rabindranath a certain distrust of Bankim, the new preacher of the old Hinduism. Rabindranath's inborn love of nature and acquired antipathy to Bankimchandra's line of thinking perhaps determined the course of his own genius. At a later time there came a phase in Rabindranath's thinking when he almost turned into a Hindu nationalist of Bankimchandra's type. But, however strong his love of his country and people, it never ran along the line of Bankimchandra's thinking. A comparison between two of their mature utterances would show the difference between their attitudes :—

Bankim : " Do not forget that love of one's countrymen ranks above all religion. "

Rabindranath :—

Build high the throne of your nation ;  
But remember it is not higher than Truth.  
If you really love your country, you must rise above it,  
And place not country above humanity.

Nearly every aspect of the great nineteenth-century

renaissance of Bengal of which I have spoken, strikes a chord in Rabindranath's mind and at times raises sublime music. Viewed in that light Rabindranath, like nearly every other great poet, is not so much original as assimilative. He is the personalized epitome of the great nineteenth-century renaissance of Bengal and of India, just as Goethe was of the great renaissance of Europe.

The twentieth century in Bengali literature opened with Rabindranath's *Naivedya*. The poet had then completed his fortieth year. Already he was the author of a considerable body of literature, which, according to many Bengali readers, represents the best work of Tagore. We are not of this view. We regard the vast body of Tagore's writings as the progressive manifestation of a developing personality, massive and multifarious; the development started early in the life of the poet and went on unimpaired right up to the moment of his death. Most fortunately, no alien exigencies ever interfered with the growth of the poet's soul or turned it awry. And so the vast body of Tagore's writings remains a mighty record of a healthy humanity, a perpetual source of joy, sustenance and inspiration to seekers after life in all ages. That the twentieth century in Bengali literature should open with Rabindranath's *Naivedya* is particularly significant from one point of view. *Naivedya* is one of the finest poetical works of Rabindranath, which embodies, on the one hand, a profound consciousness of God (in other words, of the True and the Good), and on the other, a deep sympathy for his country. He clearly foresees the fate of Europe with its greed and pride, and prophesies the blood-bath of the twentieth century.

"Behold nationalism rushing headlong to Death with its cargo of self-aggrandisement towards submerged rocks." And to God he prays on behalf of his countrymen :—

"Give me strength not to slight the humble, not to bow to the mighty."

It is worth noticing how close is the affinity between this line of thinking and that of the greatest political leader of modern India.

That Rabindranath should be deeply stirred by the Anti-Partition agitation of 1906 was only to be expected

after the revelation in *Naivedya* of his profound patriotic awareness. The shape in which Rabindranath appeared to his countrymen in those stirring days has impressed itself for ever on the minds of many Bengalees. There is no telling the number of writers and workers who in those days received from him, unawares to themselves, their initiation into their life's work. Rabindranath, however, could not keep up to the last his connexion with the Swadeshi movement. There were two principal reasons for this. For one thing, a considerable section of the movement veered off to terrorism; for another, the poet's inner life was being increasingly dominated by a creed of mystic devotion. The product of this turn in the poet's inner life was *Gitanjali* and its successors, the English translation of which won for Tagore the appreciation of Europe. The whole of India now did him homage as did the rest of the world. Many critics of Bengali poetry, however, are of the opinion that *Gitanjali* by no means represents the poet's best. Some among them would assign only a secondary importance to the poems of Rabindranath's mystic period. That this latter opinion is entirely mistaken need hardly be stated. It loses sight of the distinctive development of Rabindranath's genius. *Gitanjali* and its kind deserve a place among the most precious gifts of Rabindranath's genius, for they record a significant development of his personality. The depth of that contempt for the blood-bath of the twentieth century that he shows (as we have said above) at its opening, derives ultimately from his profound God-consciousness, and it is the same God-consciousness that inspires *Gitanjali* and its kind. (God in Rabindranath's poetry is at times a matter of profound mystic experience, but, speaking broadly, his God-consciousness may be paraphrased as an intense awareness of the True and the Good.) The whole of the poetry of Rabindranath must be regarded as one single long poem, of which the separate poems are the separate cantos. Unless his work is so regarded, it is not possible to realise its full worth and greatness. In his separate poems Rabindranath is merely a fine lyricist; it is in the totality of his poetry that he is a great poet—one whose wonderful mind has experienced nearly all the multifarious stirrings of which the human

consciousness is capable, and who has, in addition, translated them into beautiful words.

If it is a fact that Rabindranath's reputation in Bengal before his winning the Nobel Prize was less than what it was after, it is equally a fact that even as early as the last decade of the nineteenth century he had produced a band of devoted imitators, who soon came to make their mark in Bengali literature. But these disciples of Rabindranath were influenced mainly by his craftsmanship. They have written many an enjoyable poem, but perhaps only one among them, Satyendranath Datta, will be able to survive the test of time, and that not so much because of his artistry as because of the universality of his sympathy. His poetry reveals a fervour of appreciation for whatever is beautiful and great, no matter where, that is enough to win him the spontaneous respect of discriminating readers.

At the time when Rabindranath was absorbed in his mystic communings, there appeared in Bengali literature Saratchandra Chattopadhyay, who presently drew the attention of the public towards him. Some of our critics have described Saratchandra as the greatest novelist of Bengal. He has no doubt a superb power of delineation; yet not all are sure if his glory will shine the same for ever, for he is not rich in creative imagination, and the range of his thinking is comparatively narrow—this latter is certainly a great handicap for a writer of his age. But all short-comings notwithstanding, Saratchandra will ever have the respect of his readers because of his infinite sympathy for the distressed, the down-trodden and the outcast. At the root of this sympathy of his is the implied belief that man is by nature lovely and great; all his errors, sins and lapses are dust and mud sticking on the outside; in a moment they can be shaken off, and man re-established in his native glory. It is because of this latent faith of his that we are inclined to look upon Saratchandra, despite his so-called realism, as an offspring of the renaissance of Bengal—perhaps the youngest offspring. It was a new and virile faith that provided the driving force behind that renaissance. That Rammohan, Derozio, Bankimchandra, Koshabchandra, Ramkrishna, Vivekananda, Rabindranath, were all impelled by a new faith, is a point hardly

requiring elaboration. Even Madhusudan, primarily an artist, was religious in the ancient pagan sense. He was a new Prometheus, giving to man his self-respect in defiance of the frowns of the gods.

Saratchandra's appearance in Bengali literature was followed not long after by that of Kazi Nazrul Islam. Like Saratchandra, he too made a conquest of the Bengali mind within a few years. He was perhaps not more than twenty at the time he made his débüt in Bengali literature (1919-20). He must have been, therefore, a mere boy at the time of the Swadeshi movement in Bengal. Yet, somehow, he carried about him all the fire and fervour of that movement as he made his débüt. His radiant youthfulness and his passion for freedom made him in a short time the darling of Bengal. With these were combined an ardent desire to see his community gain in strength and spirit, and anguish on account of the distressed Islam of the years following the Great War of 1914-18. Nazrul was the first writer among Bengali Muslims of the modern era who was able to conquer the hearts of Hindus and Muslims alike of Bengal. Not that there were no powerful Muslim writers in Bengali immediately before him. Mir Masharaff Hossain, Kaikobad, Yakub Ali Chowdhury, Latfur Rahman, Begum Rokaya, Mazi Imdadul Haque are names that will live in the annals of modern Bengali literature, who won the esteem and admiration of the entire Province. Nor is his fame confined to his Province only. His successor in this respect is the Muslim village-poet Jasimuddin, who has won an all-Bengal status.

The question of the true worth of Nazrul's writings, as apart from his contemporary fame, has been a subject of debate among literary people in Bengal. Some have not hesitated to describe his writings as ephemeral. This view, however, no longer holds the field. None in the literary world of Bengal would deny today that Nazrul is a memorable poet of twentieth-century Bengal, nay, of India. There is a great surge of life within this poet which bears away all his faults, however numerous. Moreover, he is the only writer of modern Bengal who has specially succeeded in touching the mass mind. The poetry of Nazrul has been one of the contributing factors of that awakening of the masses

that we now see about us. From that point of view his historical importance is very great indeed.

Talking of Nazrul, one is led to enquire about the literary contribution of the Muslims of Bengal, who form the majority community of the Province. That they had a notable share in the making of early Bengali literature is a generally accepted fact. Their contributions to folk literature were as considerable as those of the Hindus. The songs of certain Muslim "bauls" (vagrant singers) were quoted with appreciation by no less a person than Rabindranath in his address at the first session of the Indian Philosophical Congress. Yet the educated Muslim of the present era has undeniably failed to take a worthy share in the making of modern Bengali literature. Two main causes of this have been the political changes of the eighteenth century and the Wahhabite movement of the nineteenth. By the former the Mussulman, proud of his earlier hegemony, was quickly reduced to insignificance. During the first half of the 19th century he remained for the most part sullenly hostile to the British (while the Hindu co-operated); the second half of the century opened with the Sepoy "Mutiny" which brought down on him Governmental displeasure. Add to this the Wahhabite movement (with its literalism and slogan of "Back to pristine Islam") which set his face towards the past. The Aligarh movement of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan did something towards the uplift, mental as well as mundane, of the Muslims of North-Western India, but left Bengal practically untouched. Thanks to Syed Ameer Ali, a disciple of Sir Syed Ahmad, just a faint ray of modernism touched the minds of the English-educated Muslims of Bengal, but it was too faint to be effective. The twentieth century, as it set in, found the educated Muslim of Bengal admiring the educated Bengali Hindu, as a result specially of the latter's success in the Anti-Partition agitation. Such was the setting amidst which Nazrul Islam found his way into Bengali literature. This will throw some light on his intimate acquaintance with Hindu mythological lore.

The years 1926-27, a time when Nazrul was deep in mass contact, witnessed the rise of a small group of Muslim thinkers in the University area of Dacca. "Emancipation

of the intellect" was their watchword, and they proclaimed themselves "kematists." They were able at the time to influence Muslim youth towards a distinctive line of thinking. The association of Nazrul with this group enhanced its influence. But it was soon faced with so much opposition in Muslim Society that it could work effectively only for about five years. Its activities, however, lingered on for a fairly long time. One or two members of the group are still active as writers. But its influence on the educated Muslim society of Bengal as a whole has waned. To its watchword of intellectual liberation Muslim Bengal today seems to prefer that of self-determination. The word "seems" is advisedly used, for neither leadership nor following has yet grown into a vivid reality in the Muslim society of Bengal. Leading Muslim writers of Bengal (the names of several of them are mentioned in the brochure by Mr. Annada Sankar and Mrs. Lila Ray) are, on the whole, votaries of intellectual liberation till today; but for the most part they plough a lonely furrow. Among self-determinists Furrukh Ahmad has come into some prominence as a writer. He is endeavouring to follow Iqbal, though he lacks Iqbal's philosophical temperament. He is young, and we must at the moment withhold judgment and analysis, and wish him well.

While the Muslim rationalists of Dacca were busily engaged in the application and propagation of their doctrine of emancipation of the intellect, there appeared in the field of Bengali literature a group of young writers who styled themselves or were styled ultra-moderns. Gokul Nag, Premendra Mitra, Jibananda Das, Buddhadev Bose, Achintya Sengupta were some of the shining lights of this group. Their Credo was well expressed in the following lines of Premendra Mitra:—

I am the poet of the carpenters, of the blacksmiths, of the brass-workers, of the day-labourers,  
I am the poet of the low.

Of this group Buddhadev Bose and Achintya Sengupta were pronounced Freudians, and on their heads were heaped the curses of elders. But abuse and protest simply helped to publicize the group all the more. Rabindranath himself got perturbed over them, and had with them an exchange of

unpleasant words comparable to the literary skirmishes between Goethe and Schiller on the one hand and the Romanticists on the other in early nineteenth-century Germany. The unpleasantness, however, did not last long. Rabindranath, the poet of eternal youth that he was, was soon convinced of the literary promise of many of these young writers. The latter even claim that they soon came to influence Rabindranath himself: it is said that the poet's later writings bear the stamp of their influence. The poet's famous latter-day novel, *Sesher Kabita* or "The Last Poem," is adduced in support of that claim: it is contended that Rabindranath would have hesitated to draw his lovers and end their story in the way he did had he penned it earlier. The claim though forceful is untenable. For the ultra-moderns were essentially egotists and hedonists. But Tagore's genius was more kinetic, not tied to one thing, even though he had his full share of the sensuousness of poets; and if he had his touches of egotism, he loved more to widen himself out in humanity. Moreover there was the difference of taste: the ultra-moderns of the day were a long way off from Tagore's refinement. The "Last Poem" of Tagore may rather be regarded as an affectionate pointer for the ultra-moderns to literary fruition in the technique they called their own.

By degrees the ultra-moderns were able to shake off many of their angularities. Much of their writing today, poetry as well as prose, is not only readable but often enjoyable. Many of them have moved away from the fog of neo-Hinduism into clearness of thinking and vision, and so they are able to view man and his environment with a commendable directness. But they are unfortunate in their historical position. They have come just after Tagore whom they cannot transcend or bypass, however hard they might try, and they are trying hard enough. That is where their position is shaky. Time must dim their lustre if they cannot grow into an ampler stature. For honours in literature are not for those who repeat but for those who rise higher. Bishnu De, however, among the post-Tagore poets, has evolved a distinctive technique which seems to have the impress of beauty about it.

Among prose-writers, Sailajananda Mukhopadhyaya,

Annada Sankar Ray, Manik Bandhopadhyaya, "Banaphul," Bibhutibhusen Bandyopadhyaya and Tarasankar Bandyopadhyaya have already distinguished themselves. Of them, again, Tarasankar is particularly popular, and perhaps deservedly. He seems to have completely shaken off egotism—the cancer eating into the vitals of many of our gifted moderns. With an intimate knowledge of the Bengal countryside he unites a considerable power of delineation. To them he adds a far-reaching vision: he observes closely the shattered life of Bengal today and looks wistfully forward to a new order of things.

Bengal today, politically and economically, is a land of chaos, but there is bright promise about her post-Tagore literature.

### 3. ENGLISH

By N. K. SIDHANTA

Prof. Nirmal Kumar Sidhanta, long connected with the University of Lucknow as Professor of English and Dean of the Faculty of Arts, has also served as Secretary of the Inter-University Board. He prepared the *Handbook of Indian Universities* in 1940. He is the author of *The Heroic Age of India* in the History of Civilization Series of Messrs. Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner and Company, London.

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In speaking of English literature produced by Indians during this generation, I feel handicapped as the speakers on the other literatures have not been. I feel that I have to be on my defence, as there are charges constantly being brought forward against creative artists who have chosen English as their medium of expression. The charges are varied, and if one classifies them they amount to the following:—

First, the English language is not a natural medium of expression for the Indian writer. Secondly, the inspiration which the Indian writer of English derives is from the West, from England and other European countries, and as such is against his natural spirit and genius. Thirdly, the cross section of society that he chooses to deal with on account of his breeding and environment, is a very limited one, and does not do justice to our country. Further, his appeal is to a very limited class of readers who have practically segregated themselves from the great majority of their fellow countrymen.

Let us examine these charges for a few minutes taking up first the charge of having chosen an artificial medium. I know that the medium of expression in literature is very important. Every form of art is an expression of feeling,

and the quality of art depends not only on intensity of emotion, but also on adequacy of expression. Adequacy of expression is as important as intensity of feeling. As it happens, literary artists have chosen a medium which does not have the direct appeal of painting, or of music, or of sculpture. The painter by choosing colours, or the musician by choosing sound as his medium, can make a direct appeal to our senses. The literary artist unfortunately cannot do that because words do not have the same direct appeal. They are after all only a conglomeration of sounds arbitrarily associated with some ideas, and therefore, a much more difficult medium for expression of feeling than that chosen by the painter or the musician. This being so, when we speak of the difficulty of an unnatural or foreign medium, are we really just and fair? Are we to blame a literary artist who chooses to write books because he has not chosen the lyrical form of expression, or do we blame him for writing novels rather than dramas? The reader may like dramas, but is the artist to blame if he chooses to write prose fiction instead? No. We have to take the artist as he is. He knows which medium best suits his genius, and if he has chosen to subject himself to a particular medium of expression, apparently it is because he thinks that he can best express himself through it.

Next, in regard to Indian writers in English being under the influence of the West, an answer has been given by our acting president this morning, when he pointed out that it was not Elizabethan England which was represented by Shakespeare, or the 17th and 19th centuries by Milton and Wordsworth, but universal humanity. It is the inspiration of humanity, then, which moves us whether it be from Western or from Eastern writers. So the fact that our inspiration comes from the West or from the East is of little consequence.

It is undoubtedly a more serious charge when we think of the limited cross section of society which alone could be dealt with by these writers if they wrote objectively. Of course this charge cannot apply in cases where the poet chooses to express only his own feelings without projecting himself into the rest of humanity. But if he indulges in objective writing, should he not survey the whole of humanity

as the basis of his theme rather than choose a limited section of society with which he happens to be familiar? The assumption is that the writer who is expressing himself through a foreign medium knows only a very limited section of people. This charge is very unfair, as we shall see if we study literature which has been produced by our English writers—some of them present here—during the last 25 or 30 years. Further it is said that these writers can appeal only to a limited number of readers, as English is familiar to comparatively few in this country, and the creative artist who has chosen English as his medium of expression can cater only to them. But is it the task of the writer to be thinking of the number of readers to whom he is going to appeal? Do we value art by its aim to be a best-seller or because of its capturing the widest market? Should we blame Browning because he appealed only to the limited few? We surely do not value a piece of writing by the number of people that it attracts, or by the number of copies that is likely to sell.

Still there is undoubtedly a disadvantage in writing in a foreign medium, which we cannot overlook. This morning one of our talented speakers spoke about the future of the Indian drama. When I think of the Indian drama written in English, I cannot feel very optimistic. Looking at what has been produced in this regard during the last 25 or 30 years and thinking of its future in the years to come, one cannot feel hopeful, for the simple reason that here is a type of literature which does not depend wholly on the creative artist, but must appeal to the public at large. Drama is not intended to be read, it is intended to be seen. Literary or closet drama which is not meant to be produced on the stage is definitely an artificial product. It does not serve the legitimate object of drama. In the case of all dramas we have to think of the illusion of reality and naturally we ask if it is possible to produce this illusion in a drama where Indians converse in English. We have to face the same problem even in novels where dialogues preponderate. What is the natural medium of expression for Indian characters? I have gone through dialogues in novels written by our Indian writers in English, and I find that this is where these writers have to face the greatest difficulty. They have to make the language almost

semi-natural in order to prevent it from being definitely and positively unnatural. The language spoken by these characters cannot be colloquial English nor may it be the English of Burke or Macaulay. It has to be something like a neutral medium and the greatest difficulty is experienced by artists in regard to a medium of expression for characters who have been imaginatively created. And if it is difficult to manage this in prose fiction, how very much more difficult it must be in dramatic writing where characters appear on the stage and have artificially to produce an illusion of reality?

Further, if there has been prejudice against the use of English as the medium of expression by Indian writers, it is due to the case of creative artists like Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore, who produced the greatest type of creative literature while expressing himself in his mother-tongue, but could not rise to the same heights in English. It is not even the greatest genius who can perhaps be equally great in two languages. But in defending Indian writers who write in English, I am not thinking of those who have attempted to write in two different languages—there are very few such examples. I am thinking only of men like Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and Sri Aurobindo who have chosen English as their medium of expression from the beginning to the end of their literary career.

I wish I could talk to you of the greatest of these writers at some length. For it is a pleasure and an inspiration to discuss the creative qualities of a genius like our president or Sri Aurobindo, or the magnificent prose which has been written by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Rabindranath Tagore or Sir S. Radhakrishnan. It is an inspiration to read such prose, to discuss it and to think of it as an ideal to strive towards and to attain. It is not necessary for me to dilate on these qualities within the few minutes allotted to me and for the benefit of an audience like this.

I want to dwell rather upon the variety of writing than on the heights reached. The heights have been great, and if I may say so, on account of the heights reached by the few, criticism has been vigorous about the many. We have imagined that other writers are negligible because they have not reached the standards set up by half a dozen or ten people,

whom we may count among the greatest creative artists not only of our country but of the world. But why should we judge them by the high achievements of the greatest ? Why should we not judge them by the standards of literature which is produced in the different languages, in the various European languages for instance, in the present generation ? What is the level which has been reached by literature in this generation, shall I say in France, Poland, Austria or England ? If we judge by these levels, have we in India any need to be ashamed of our quality of writing ? It is true we cannot emulate the West in quantity ; it is said that 700 books are produced every day in America. But as regards quality, I am convinced that we have nothing to fear if we judge our literature by the standards laid down by critics in these foreign countries.

I do not have much time, fortunately for myself, to examine individual artists, and even if I had the time, I would not perhaps be justified in doing so. We have some of them present here among us. Is it not for them to come and explain their vision and their work and not for me to attempt it ? After all, if, as Plato said, the poet is twice removed from reality, the critic is at least thrice, if not four times removed, and knowing his limitations he should know where to stop.

#### 4. GUJARATI

By JAYANTKRISHNA H. DAVE

Prof. Jayantkrishna H. Dave, M.A., LL.B., is the Honorary Registrar and Assistant Director of the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan of Bombay, and Joint Editor of its journal, the *Bharatiya Vidya*. Professor Dave is a Post-Graduate Professor of Sanskrit of the Bombay University and a former Secretary of the Gujarati Sahitya Parishad.

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Modern Gujarati began with 1850 and can be roughly divided into three periods of 30 years each. Contact with the West and familiarity with Western literature and culture gave birth to a new literary renaissance in Gujarati.

The first period runs from 1850 to 1885. A number of literary societies were founded during this period—the Gujarat Vernacular Society, the Buddhivardhak Sabha, the Jnanpracharak Sabha and the Forbes Sabha. Principally, this was the age of reforms and of first reactions to Western influences. The authors were full of vigour and enthusiasm, but their literary art was somewhat crude and elementary. Narmadashankar and Dalpatram were the chief literary figures of this age. Dalpatram is the link between the old and the new elements in Gujarati Literature. His poems are of the old style and technique with jingling couplets meant to please assemblies. His English education was limited but he was a steadfast worker. He wrote two plays, one of which is a farce, the first of its kind in the language. He was the first to attempt to put Gujarati prosody on scientific lines. He joined the Gujarat Vernacular Society and edited *Buddhiprakasha*, the first literary magazine in the language.

Narmadashanker is the founder of Modern Gujarati. He founded the Buddhivardhak Sabha in Bombay. He became

the apostle of revolt. He introduced new form and diction in poetry; wrote vigorously on love and patriotism; was the first to write subjective poetry (*Ātmalakshī Kavya*) in Gujarati on an extensive scale. His language was passionate, but rough and lacking in refinement. He was also the father of modern Gujarati prose. He wrote on prosody, composed the first dictionary in Gujarati, as well as a dictionary of mythology, and attempted to write a history of the world. He loved and lived a heroic life full of battle-cries and adventures. In his last work, *Dharma Vichara*, he made a recantation of his creed of revolt, and preached a study and admiration of Aryan culture and institutions.

Navalram founded the modern school of literary criticism in the language. He was sober and sympathetic, and his judgement was balanced. He also wrote a comedy under the inspiration of Molière. Mahipatram produced *Vanraj Chavdo*, and Nandashankar wrote *Karan Ghelo*—the two outstanding historical novels of the age written under the influence of Scott and the English novelists. Ranchhodhbhai was the leader of a society established to appreciate Shakespeare, and under his influence produced several dramas, the best being *Lalitadukhadarshaka*. But the dramas were didactic, containing long dialogues, and the characterisation was weak. Mansukhrami advocated complete Sanskritisation of the language and tried to banish all non-Sanskritic words from Gujarati, but met with poor success. The aim was impossible of realisation, but he showed the way to enriching and developing the language. He wrote *Astodaya* and was a staunch and sincere follower of the Sankar school of Vedanta. Talyarkhan brought out *Ratnalakshmi* and *Kulina ane Mudra* in the choice language of the period. He was under the influence of Taylor, an English author, and was the first to write a living story after *Karan Ghelo*. Bholanath Sarabhai produced psalms and prayers in praise of the Formless Absolute. Hargovind Das introduced Deshya elements into the language and edited the *Prachina Gujarati Kavyamala*, publishing old manuscripts for the first time. A few Parsi authors wrote in the chaste Gujarati of the period, but generally the Parsis evolved their own language known as Parsi Gujarati.

This period was largely under the influence of Shakespeare, Scott, Lytton, Shelley and Keats. There was a steady attempt to introduce the romantic impulse of Victorian England in the old technique of Gujarat with a slight attempt at reviving the Sanskritic literary tradition.

The second literary period was from 1885 to 1914 and may be termed the period of Sanskritic revival. The University of Bombay was established in the sixties. The Arts course devoted to the study of Sanskrit and English became popular. There was a revival of Sanskritic learning and culture. By 1890 the University produced a group of Gujarati scholars. Govardhanram, Manilal, Narasinharao, Keshavlal, Ramanbhai, Manishanker (Kant), Kalapi, Anandshanker and Balwantrai belong to this age of scholars.

The best work of this age was *Saraswatichandra*, the first great novel by Govardhanram. He has tried in it to give a picture of the fusion of the ancient Aryan Culture and new Western influences in modern Indian society. Its first part, published in 1887, was the result of vivid imagination inspired by noble idealism. Its appealing characterisation and richness made it a landmark in literature. It was the first great novel of real life in Gujarat, and a landmark of the new literary renaissance. The work was acclaimed with great enthusiasm. Its four parts treat a number of subjects —society, the joint family, state-craft, religion and philosophy, and everywhere the author's profound learning and broadminded vision are evident. He derived his inspiration from Bana and Magha, classical Sanskrit writers, as also from writers of the West like Wordsworth and Lytton. The work is rightly called a "Purana." There are many defects in it when considered purely from the point of view of art. Long dialogues and moral reflections weaken the effect of artistic situations. With all that, it inspired Gujarat for more than twenty-five years.

Manilal was a great prose-writer and philosopher. He interpreted the Vedanta to Gujarat. For the first time Gujarati prose in his hands became elastic, stately, sonorous and eloquent. He developed the essay. Every paragraph was a perfection of logic, style, neatness and rhetoric. He was also a critic writing vigorously and in a new vein.

Narasinharao published his first poems, *Kusumamala*, in 1887, and then for nearly forty years he remained in the front rank in Gujarati literature as a poet, critic, essayist and above all as a philologist. *Kusumamala* is the first collection of the author's romantic poems, lyrics and odes, and reminds the reader of Palgrave's *Golden Treasury*. It inspired a number of subsequent authors. Narasinharao wrote two more such collections, *Hridayavina* and *Nupurajhankara*. His *Smarana Sanhita*, written after the death of his son, as an *In Memoriam*, a masterpiece full of restraint, faith, pathos, dignity and a sense of humility, unsurpassed in the literature of India. He was a very learned, ruthless, accurate, and powerful literary critic. His lectures on Gujarati philology are profoundly learned and exact, and by themselves are sufficient to give the author a prominent position in the world of Indian scholarship.

D. B. Keshavlal Dhruv rendered Sanskrit classics into charming, accurate and rhythmic Gujarati—*Gitagovinda*, *Amarusataka*, *Vikramorvasiya*, *Mudrarakshasa*, and the dramas of Bhasa. He has written learned introductions to each one of them. He has traced the history of Gujarati metres in his scholarly lectures—*Padyarachanani Aitihasik Alochana*. His study of old Gujarati and his editing of such works bear marks of his profound learning.

After Navalram, the other outstanding literary critic of Gujarat was Sir Ramanbhai. He applied Western standards of literary criticism to Gujarati Literature. He opposed the Mansukhram school of orthodoxy and wrote the famous satirical work, *Bhadram Bhadra*, full of humour and ridicule. It reminds the reader of Dickens's *Pickwick Papers*. He was the editor of the monthly *Vasant* for a long time. His literary criticisms are collected in *Kavita ane Sahitya*. In richness of language and in formulating the theory of Art, Sir Ramanbhai is much in advance of the earlier literary critics. He also wrote *Raino Parvata*, which for long remained one of the few good literary dramas in the language.

Manishanker Bhatt (Kant) wrote little, and in poetry whatever he wrote was perfect. His poems collected in *Purvalapa* are lyrics of great beauty and show perfection of form and technique. He introduced *Khanda Kavya*, a short

descriptive poem with poetic dialogues in different metres.

The Thakor of Lathi, Sursinhji, is known in Gujarati literature as Kalapi. His poems are collected in *Kekarava*. He took inspiration from Manilal and Manishanker. He was neither as learned nor as artistic as Narasinharao or Kant, but whatever he wrote was the product of intense personal feelings. He died young. He had a sense of wonder and delight, was extremely sentimental, and had an inordinate love for tears. Love, faith, surrender and sacrifice are frequent topics in his poems, many of which have a genuine poetic ring, and at times a Byronic flavour.

Dr. Anandshanker Dhruva was a great philosopher and scholar of Sanskrit and the Pro-Vice-Chancellor of the Hindu University. His position in Gujarati literature was that of a high priest and a referee. His essays, addresses and even notes are one and all judicious and full of learning. His language is pure and dignified. Though Sanskritised, it does not appear to be overladen with difficult words. He wrote for the monthly *Vasant*, of which he was for many years an editor. On account of his great erudition, broad-mindedness and balanced criticism, his opinions have been sought for as authoritative and treated with great respect.

Prof. Balwantrai Thakore is a versatile author, poet, dramatist, essayist, historian and critic. He emphasises weight and thought in poetry. His prose style also possesses these merits but is often involved. He has written many sonnets in *Prithvi Chhanda*, and introduced innovations in poetic technique. Every word is thoughtfully selected, but he is so fond of rough and rugged words that even though deliberately put in, they sound hard or jarring to the ear. Balwantrai has inspired practically the whole group of new poets and helped them to evolve new and progressive methods in poetic technique.

Khabardar, in contrast to many other Parsi writers, has written in chaste Gujarati. He is the author of several works which are collections of his poems, songs, garbis and prayers. He writes gracefully and without any effort. He has a great mastery over metres. In *Kalika* he has introduced his own *Muktadvara Chhanda* similar to the English blank-verse. His *Darshanika* is a collection of philosophical

poems in *Jhulana Chhanda*, like the *Prabhatis* of Narasinha Mehta. Many of them have sublimity of thought and artistic beauty, and are couched in simple, flowing and graceful language. He has also written heroic and patriotic songs of Modern Gujarat.

Kavi Nanalal captured the attention of Gujarat by his extraordinary poetic genius, by his rhythmic prose which he calls *Apadyagadya*, by his sweet rhythmic and idealistic *Rasas*, *Garbis* and songs. He coined new words expressive of force and dignity ; revived words from old Gujarati and Kathiawari, and gave charm and sweetness to the language. He wrote for some time under the pen-name of "Prem Bhakti" (Love Devotion) fully suggestive of trends in his writings. He has sung the glories of Aryan Culture. He has described conjugal love with rare and pure idealism. He has written a novel somewhat in the nature of a prose poem, several essays and addresses, numerous lyrics and *Garbis*, and many dramas. His characters have very little of the human element. They always soar very high on the wings of idealism and romanticism and often appear unreal. His prose or *Apadyagadya* is rhythmic and stately. Many have tried to imitate it but failed. But the poet is sometimes lost in the rhythm and profusion of words, and the meaning at places becomes either thin or very vague. Several words occur frequently irrespective of sense or propriety. Certain combinations of words seem very inappropriate. But in spite of all this, the poet has acquired a deservedly high and permanent position in Gujarati literature. He has almost recreated old folk-songs, and written wonderfully artistic and bewitching lyrics and *Garbis* in captivating tunes. The whole of Gujarat has hailed and admired them.

The most outstanding figure in modern Gujarati literature is Kanaiyalal Munshi. He has produced historical and social novels, puranic and social dramas, short stories and works on criticism, essays and addresses, biographies and autobiographies. In English he wrote the *Gujarata and Its Literature* and a *History of Imperial Gurjars*. He is the author of about forty-five works, some of them written in English. *Imperial Gurjars* is a monument to his scholarship and his love for Gujarat. This legal luminary, an Ex-Home

Minister of Bombay and an astute politician, is also an all-pervading figure in modern Gujarati literature. He guides the Gujarati Sahitya Parishad, he is the President of the Sansad, and the founder-President of the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, an Indological institution. He has brought passion and high idealism into literature, a fresh vigorous and brilliant style, a new technique in wording dialogues, and a living characterisation. He has stood for breaking the fetters of convention in literature and life. He has preached the joy of life—*Jivanano Ullasa* and its Promethean life and strength. Men and women in his works are real, not thin and attenuated. He has in prose given to Gujarat sagas of love, pathos and heroism. His characters like Anantanand, Kirtidev or Anandsuri are full of fiery idealism. Munjal, Munj, Vishwamitra are moulded on a rare heroic model. The female characters in his works are also proud and luminous figures ultimately surrendering themselves to men of their own free choice. His historical novels give a romantic picture of the glories of ancient Gujarat, and remain unrivalled. *Verni-vasulat* is the best of his social novels. His social dramas paint the foibles of society with sardonic delight. He has written a series of novels and dramas which together form a sort of saga of the pre-Mahabharat period. It revolves round the mythic founder of Aryan Culture and depicts man and life on an epic scale. He has based his philosophy of life which finds expression in several works, on his characteristic interpretation of the *Gita*. Every man has his own characteristic temperament and aptitudes. To perfect them is the law of his being; only then he becomes an elemental force. In that perfection lies his self-realisation and salvation.

Mahatma Gandhi is a world-force; his contribution to the development of modern Gujarat is phenomenal. He is not an individual but a personified combination of several unique and powerful institutions. His gospel of truth and non-violence has revitalised the country and changed the trends and technique of literature also. He does not claim to be a poet or a scholar. His writings are his autobiography and his letters and articles on various subjects. But every line of his comes straight from the heart and has a great moving force. His language is direct, clear and unsophis-

ticated. By its very simplicity it acquires a sheer penetrating power. Even his expressions of anger, always restrained, have a majesty about them, and whenever he is inspired by his inner voice his writings have a Biblical strength. His autobiography is one of the most precious of human documents, containing his struggle in every sphere of life and an account of his experiments with truth. Gandhiji's letters are a voluminous literature in themselves, concise, perfect, and highly appropriate to the occasion. Each letter is written with frankness and close intimacy. The tone and atmosphere carry conviction. Every possible question is referred to him for advice, and his pithy replies have wielded great influence in moulding numerous careers. He has given to Gujarati a great volume of literature with a universal appeal and moral elevation.

The literary tendencies initiated by Mahatma Gandhi were worked out and supplemented by a band of workers in the Gujarat Vidyapith. Kaka Kalelkar wrote sketches and articles on numerous subjects. Though a Maharashtrian, his control over Gujarati is superb. His language is highly idiomatic, graceful, rich and imaginative. He aims at some moral purpose. His writings exhibit a profound study of Puranic literature and wide acquaintance with the cultural history of ancient India. Kishorelal Mashruwala is one of the few philosophical thinkers Gujarat has produced. On many important subjects he has held independent views and has presented them with great clarity and learning. His *Jivan Shodhan* and *Gita Manthan* are highly thought-provoking. He has interpreted the philosophical side of Gandhism.

Ramnarayan Pathak is the author of several short stories; he has established his reputation also as a sound and deep literary critic. He opposes the tendency blindly to adopt wholesale the principles of Western criticism and insists on incorporating the traditional Indian standards as well. He has been a sound student of logic and philosophy. He has written stories on a variety of subjects in a delightful and picturesque style. His humour is delicate, often interwoven with pathos.

Gaurishankar Joshi, or Dhumaketu as he is known, has written numerous short stories of great merit, as well as some

historical novels and criticisms. His short stories are perfect in technique and his style is rich, elegant and idiomatic. His choice of subjects is varied—encompassing the rich and the poor, the town and the village, as well as folklore. His stories are collected under the title of *Tankha*. After Kanaiyalal Munshi, Dhumaketu has taken up incidents from the history of Gujarat for his novels.

Ramanlal Desai started his literary career as a dramatist. His *Shankita Hridaya* became very popular, particularly among collegian artistes. Thereafter, he wrote a number of social novels. His style is refined, flowing and simple. Similar incidents and environment are found repeated in many of his novels. The hero is generally a rich man's son, wants an adventurous life, sees and studies the conditions of the poor, and ultimately makes a number of sacrifices. *Divya Chakshu* is regarded as the best of his novels. It depicts the Satyagraha movement, Gandhiji's gospel, untouchability, and the heroism of Gujarat. The atmosphere in his novels at some places is either pale or unreal. He views the progressive forces in modern Gujarat with great admiration.

Jhaverchand Meghani has re-interpreted the folklore of the Province in his poems and stories. He has made the *charani* bardic literature available to Gujarat. By re-editing old songs and composing new ones in a similar style, he has contributed to literature forceful folk-songs, heroic poems, charming *Halardans* and vigorous *rasas*. He has also translated into Gujarati some Bengali novels. He has sung gloriously of the Gandhi Age. It is a pleasure to hear him singing his folk-songs. His prose has given to the Gujarati language some old Gujarati words, and sweet and charming phrases. D. B. Krishnalal Jhaveri is a veteran critic, a sound Persian scholar, and the author of *Milestones in Gujarati Literature* and its two companion volumes. Vijayray Kalyan-ray, Visvanath Bhatt and Navalram Trivedi are some of those of repute in the field of literary criticism.

Miranbai was the greatest poetess of western India. She wrote graceful, melodious and exquisite lyrics in the 16th century. In subsequent centuries Diwalibai, Radhabai, Krishnabai, Gauribai and other women writers tried to follow Miranbai's tradition. In modern Gujarat the wave of general

awakening has also affected women ; they have become free and independent, and have begun more and more to take advantage of university education. Lady Vidyagauri was the first lady graduate of Gujarat. Sumati Trivedi, Vijayalakshmi Trivedi and Dipakba Desai wrote charming poems. Hansa Mehta edited a weekly, wrote three plays and has translated Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. Priyamati or Jyotsna Shukla edited a weekly and a monthly, wrote essays and composed delicate lyrics and patriotic songs of poetic merit. Kanuben and Chaitanyabala Majumdar were also promising writers but died young. Jayamangauri contributed a few lyrics. Lilavati Munshi jointly edited *Gujarat* for some years with her husband, Kanaiyalal Munshi. She wrote *Rekha-Chitro ane Bija Laekho* (Sketches and Other Writings) ; *Kumaradevi*, a play of five acts; short stories, plays collected in two parts called *Jivanmanthi Jadel* ; and *Vadhu Rekha Chitro* (Further Sketches). Her style is polished and restrained. She has painted the independent personality of woman. Her sketches are vivid portraits made with a few significant strokes, and have acquired a special position in literature.

Sundaram, Umashanker Joshi, Chandravadan Mehta, Badarayan, Snehrashmi, Betai, Mansukhlal Jhaveri, Shridharani and a few others are modern poets of merit. Each of them has produced one or more collections of poems. Modern poetry has certain common trends and characteristics.

Narmad was the first romantic poet of Gujarat in this period of transition. The age of Govardhanram is described as one of scholars, of compromise, and of a love for abstractions. Harasinhrao Kant, Nanalal and Balwantrai very successfully employed Sanskrit metres; blank verse was introduced as Apadyagadya, Prithvi, Vanaveli or Muktdhara. The idea that poetry need not be sung was developed. The subjects also began to be varied. But there was more emphasis on learning than on understanding the masses and presenting real life. Then came World War I. Gujarati was introduced in the University from Matriculation up to M. A. The Gujarat Vidyapith was established. The Gandhian movement produced a new awakening. There was strong reaction in favour of reviving Eastern studies and

culture. Poetry became more realistic; thought, weight, new technique, revival of folklore, simplicity of life, novelty, sympathy for the poor and the downtrodden—these became the characteristics of the new poetry. Man—the humble man—became the centre of attention. Communism, non-violent struggle, sacrifice, and universal brotherhood are also amply reflected in modern literature. With this new development there is also a danger of an over-emphasis, already noticeable in the younger poets, on the element of thought in poetry, indifference to form and metre, introduction of jarring words, selection of commonplace subjects, or philosophising on ordinary incidents of life. But on the whole, the march is upwards, highly encouraging, and full of promise.

Narmad was the father of Gujarati prose. Govardhanram, Manilal, Narasinharao, Ramanbhai and Anandshanker cultivated it and gave it richness, charm, and majesty. Munshi made it elastic, terse, and vigorous, aiming at perfection of form. Gandhiji made it simple and appealing to the masses. Kalelkar added Sanskritic grace and idiomatic charm without making the language pedantic.

Bhagavanlal Indraji was the one figure in the last century who acquired an All-India fame in the field of historical research and epigraphy. Thereafter Durgashanker Shastri, Muni Jinavijayaji, Commisariat, Munshi and Sankalia have taken up historical research and made valuable contributions. Historical fiction was produced by Munshi and Dhumaketu, social fiction by Govardhanram, Munshi, Ramanlal, Dhumaketu and Meghani, and dramas by Ramanbhai, Munshi, Batu Umarwadia, Chandravadan Mehta and Raiman Vakil. Biographies were written by Kantilal Pandya (of Govardhanram); Vinayak Mehta (of Nandashanker), Munshi (of Narmad and Narasinha Mehta), Vishwanath Bhatt (of Narmad), Nanalal (of Dalpatram); autobiographies by Gandhiji and Munshi; short stories by Munshi, Dhumaketu, Ramnarayan, Lilavati Munshi and Meghani; humorous literature by Ramanbhai, Dhansukhlal, Jyotindra Dave; philosophical literature by Manilal, Anandshanker, Narmadashanker Mehta and Kishorelal. *Vasant*, *Prashan*, *Gujarat*, *Kaumudi*, *Sahitya*, *Urmī*, *Kumar* and several other monthlies developed; *Navjivan* stands all by itself; *Gujarati* and *Prajabandhu* are

notable weeklies. The above-mentioned list in every case is merely illustrative and not exhaustive.

Respect for women, and a desire to see them free and independent, has led to a feminist trend in literature. Love in its subjective form is freely sung without reserve. A burning and passionate nationalism is discernible in all the authors. There have been alternate waves of romanticism and realism, leading to a periodical fusion of both. India's glorious past has been recreated in vivid colours. Gujarat has been absorbing all modern tendencies in literature pretty successfully and within a short time. The first reactions to Western contact, Sanskritic revival, political awakening, the Gandhian Age, communism, and new forms and experiments in literature have had a prompt response. Gujarat may not have produced an epic in these days of rush and activity, but she can proudly put before the world the exquisite lyrics of Nanalal, the great historical fiction of Munshi, and the stirring autobiographies of Gandhiji and Munshi which may compare with some of the best in the literature of the world.

The three eminent contemporary literary figures are Nanalal, Gandhiji and Munshi. The message of Nanalal is Prem-Bhakti or ideal love uncontaminated by earthly passions. Munshi's theme in literature is love undying and yet realistic, heroic and elemental; strength challenging and undefeated; and an India ageless, undivided, and triumphant. Gandhiji's message is Truth and Non-violence, passionate service and moral strength, the dignity of heroic suffering and the supremacy of the moral order.

## 5. HINDI

By RAM KUMAR VARMA

Dr. Ram Kumar Varma, M.A., PH.D., of the Hindi Department, University of Allahabad, a distinguished Hindi poet, critic, and playwright, represents Hindi on the All-India Linguistic Committee of the P. E. N. All-India Centre.

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### BACKGROUND :—

Twentieth-century Hindi Literature has very rich traditions to fall back upon. On the one hand it owes its inspiration to the *Braja Bhasha* compositions of great poets like Tulsidas, Surdas, Deva, Behari, Senapati and Padmaker with brilliant imitators, and, on the other, to the sterner creations of *Khari Boli*, the inter-Provincial dialect of Western Hindi, by Bhartendu Harishchandra and his contemporaries. Thus in the early years of the twentieth century modern Hindi literature developed along two main channels—*Braja* and *Khari Boli*—side by side, though along one more than along the other. *Braja Bhasha* with traces of its past splendours lingers like an unloved guest, while *Khari Boli* which is the language of the day develops newer strains in newer directions. But in spite of the indifference with which the younger generation of writers has begun to look upon *Braja Bhasha*, there are many readers who even now appreciate *Braja Bhasha* alone and see with wistful eyes the “trailing clouds” of its glory.

*Braja Bhasha*, which like *Khari Boli*, owes its existence to the *Saurseni Apabhramsa*, was the main medium of poetic expression in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. *Braja Bhasha* is the language of fairies—so sweet, and charming. The words are soft, devoid of bones, as it were, and produce no grating sound. To this was added the genius of the

Krishna-Cult poets, to portray the Divine love of Shri Krishna. On account of its refreshing sweetness, the dialect continued also in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, as the chief vehicle of poetic expression. But there was a very great difference in the treatment of the subject-matter. The religious fervour and the spiritual love which characterised the poets of the Krishna Cult degenerated into sensuality. Shri Krishna was not the divine lord but was a voluptuary who beguiled his luxurious life with amorous cowherd maids. The symbolical and spiritual relations between Radha and Shri Krishna were lost in the desire of the poets to give a correct account of conjugal love in the *Asta Yama*, the daily routine of the Nayaka and the Naiyaka. There was an unceasing effort at chiselling and polishing the words rather than at improving the matter. Every poet thought it his duty to narrate the oft-told tale. His aim was to bring to perfection the sweetness of the dialect and to crowd as many figures of speech as possible into a single line. He indeed displayed the pomp of the tongue but his thoughts and emotions remained hidden. The same topics were touched again and again only to produce monotony and repulsion. He wrote poetry alone. Prose was too uncultured for him to display the charm of the language. By the end of the nineteenth century *Braja Bhasha* had become lustreless. It had lost its sustained brilliance, and there were only three poets, Rai Devi Prasad Purna, Pandit Satya Narain Kavi Ratna and Shri Jagannath Das Ratnakar, to provide the last specimens of the dialect, which had known nothing formerly but happiness and exaltation. The days of its brilliance were past. The twentieth century saw the great edifice of *Braja Bhasha* collapse with a terrible crash.

#### THE NEW FACTORS :—

The twentieth century brings *Khari Boli* into prominence. This was mainly due to four factors. Firstly, the coming of the English influence which resulted in the establishment of the Fort William College and the subsequent recognition of *Khari Boli* as the medium of instruction. Secondly, the literary contribution of Bharatendu Harish-chandra who gave a standard form to *Khari Boli* prose in his dramas. Thirdly, the publication of various journals

and magazines in that language. Fourthly, the establishment of the Nagri Pracharini Sabha which embarked upon an extensive scheme of developing *Khari Boli* literature in all its branches and with this end in view started a monthly magazine *Saraswati* and a book series *Manoranjan Pustak-mala* to cultivate *Khari Boli* in prose and poetry alike, and to publish books on various branches of knowledge and literature.

English and its Western tradition created a new social class which in the course of its development tried to assimilate English ideology in all its fulness. The middle class came into existence through English educational institutions, which in place of carrying on Oriental studies, gave an impetus to the learning of Western literature and science. The introduction of the printing-press revolutionised the very system of literary production and enabled the publication of journals and magazines which brought the wealth of thought of writers within the reach of the masses. The people with their growing zeal for language and literature established various literary centres headed by the Nagri Pracharini Sabha and the Hindi Sahitya Sammelan. Thus a series of events led to the development of Hindi literature in the twentieth century.

The study of English literature gave an impetus to the novel, the essay, literary criticism and the short story. It is wrong to imagine that these forms of literature did not exist in pre-English days. They did, only they became more popular under Western influence, as writers turned more and more to Western models. Besides, the outlook of authors on life underwent a change.

#### THE KHARI BOLI :—

The first decade of the twentieth century was mainly dominated by *Saraswati*, the organ of the Nagri Pracharini Sabha, and its editor, Pandit Mahabir Prasad Dwivedi, who insisted on clear-cut forms of essays and criticisms. He was the first to advocate the cause of *Khari Boli* poetry in the place of *Braja Bhasha*, which was still bound down by tradition. He maintained that poetry and prose must be written in the spoken dialect of the people and demonstrated the fact by bringing out in 1909 the *Kavita Kalap*, a collection of poems contributed by himself and four other important poets

of his time—Shri Maithili Sharan Gupta, Nathuram Shanker Sharma, Rai Devi Prasad Purna, and Kampta Prasad Guru. Although the subjects were mostly mythological and religious, the experiment went a great way towards providing that poetry could use *Khari Boli* as its medium of expression. This fact could not, however, do away with the lingering memory of *Braja Bhasha*.

The experiment was successful, and the first poet to write an independent and important work in *Khari Boli* was Ayodhya Singh Upadhyaya who in his *Priya Pravas* depicted the emotional and psychological story of Shri Krishna's departure to Mathura. The new spirit of Realism was there in the *Priya Pravas*, as the author deliberately avoided any suggestion of the supernatural. He tried to paint the life of his hero, Shri Krishna, as a great man working in the service of his people and not as a god.

The patriotic sentiment of the period under survey found expression for the first time in *Bharat Bharati* of Maithili Sharan Gupta, who wrote on the model of Hali's *Mussaddas*. It was in praise of India's past achievements, lamentation for the present and a fervent hope for the future. The work lacked poetic greatness, yet it was enthusiastically received by Hindi readers, as it struck a new note. Besides these two, there were minor works by Pandit Shri Dhar Pathak who translated Goldsmith's *Deserted Village* in *Ujar Gram* and wrote many original songs. Till the year 1914, before the first World War broke out, modern Hindi literature lacked richness and variety. Prose was poor and confined to essays and a few books on history and the social sciences. Even the five years of war could not excite much enthusiasm for creative work. The war literature was nominal and remained confined to a few narrative and emotional outbursts against Germany and her allies.

#### THE INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS:—

From the year 1919, when the Indian National Congress at its Nagpur Session passed a resolution supporting the Non-co-operation Movement, modern Hindi literature took a definite turn towards nationalism. Poems were written to influence a strong spirit of sacrifice and martyrdom for the Motherland. These poems belonged to two categories. The

first pertained to songs which could be sung in processions and Prabhat Pheries, and the second aimed at giving long narratives on the patriots of India like Mahatma Gandhi, Lala Lajpat Rai, Sarojini Naidu and the Ali brothers. Newspapers and magazines were full of patriotic poems which were later on compiled in the form of books and sold at *melas* (fairs) and *tamashas* (places of amusement). Not only poems, but also other types of literature came into existence, and novels and short stories began to multiply. Munshi Prem Chand, the great novelist and short-story writer, was a figure of these times. Although he had already made a name in Urdu literature, he had written only short stories in Hindi. The National Movement, however, made him write more and more in Hindi, and he rose to the occasion. He not only enunciated the principles of *Satyagraha* (non-violent resistance) and *Ahimsa* (non-violence) in his short stories and novels but also interpreted the contemporary social and economic life of our provinces. Gradually he won fame as the greatest novelist and short-story writer in Hindi.

The year 1925 was the richest in literary and linguistic productions.

#### POETRY :—

Hindi poetry has exhibited three phases in the course of its development. The first phase was purely narrative, the second mystical, and the third progressive. Narrative poetry was confined to religious, mythological and historical themes. It consisted chiefly of descriptions of seasons, natural scenery, and places of importance. Mukut Dhar Pande is the most important name in this category. The mystical phase had two sources of inspiration in Hindi. The first came from a study of classical treatises like the Upanishads and old poets like Kabir, Jayasi and Mira, and the other from Rabindranath Tagore, and the poets of the romantic revival such as Shelley, Keats and Wordsworth. The mystical writers in Hindi began their work in a small way at first, but with the passage of time gathered strength and gave an exquisite form of literature to the people. Shri Jayashanker Prasad was the most important of them. He began his mystical writing with allegorical Nature descriptions in *Jharna* and ended it with a divine realisation in *Kamayani*, which is a complete study of

human life in terms of Indian philosophy. *Kamayani* is the epic of man's struggle against destiny and his final release from the bonds of this world in the realisation of God. Prasad's contribution to modern Hindi poetry will be remembered for all time. The next poet, Nirala, displayed two contradictory elements in his poetry. On the one side he is purely philosophical as, e. g., in his songs of divine glory in *Geetika*, and on the other he is restless and turbulent in describing the Shakti Puja of Shri Rama, or Shivaji's letter to Aurangzeb. This queer combination justifies his name Nirala. The third and the best poet after Prasad is Pandit Sumitra Nandan Pant who has brought the sweetness of *Braja Bhasha* to *Khari Boli* with great novelty in poetic imagery. He excelled every one of his contemporary poets in his descriptions of nature, in his mystical experiences and in the study of his age. *Pallava* is his best work with an exquisite exposition of human psychology. His *Yug Vani* and *Gramya* have brought realism to his poetry. In them he has associated himself with the joys and the sorrows of his countrymen. The next is Shrimati Mahadevi Verma who is characterised by almost the same pathos and depth of feeling as Mira Bai, the poetess of Mewar. Her *Yama* and *Deep Shikha* constitute the best expressions of mystical sentiments in Hindi literature. The third phase is the giving expression to the modern progressive view-point which does not hesitate to delineate our present ills boldly. This poetry mainly revolves round the pathetic and heart-rending conditions of our peasants and labourers, and is sharply critical of the propertied classes, the mill-owners and the zamindars. The poems of this type give a naked description of life, and do away with all the conventions of classical and medieval poetry. They do not believe in metrical sweetness and run in disturbed lines as if to wreak vengeance on all stereotyped modes. The most important names of this class are Nirala, Bhagwati Charan Varma, Ram Vilas Sharma and Shamsher Jang.

#### THE DRAMA :—

The Drama is the next important literary form. Bharatendu Harish Chandra had already in the nineteenth century, laid the foundation of the drama. But the stage was badly

abused by the theatrical companies of Northern India, who did not exhibit good literary taste in their performances. The translations of D. L. Roy's Bengali plays brought a wealth of art to Hindi, but these translations could not help the Hindi plays themselves to evolve. Dramatists like Madhava Shukla, Badri Nath Bhatt, Govinda Ballabha Pant, Makhana Lal Chaturvedi and Baldeo Prasad Misra attempted to bring Hindi dramas back to their glory. But it was Jayashanker Prasad who took to the art with superb excellence and composed several brilliant historical dramas. He covered a long range of cultural history from Chandra Gupta Maurya to Harsh Verdhan giving correctly the historical, political, social, and philosophical background of the periods. He drew a true picture of situations and presented vividly the internal and external clash of characters. He was a dramatist in the real sense of the word, and infused new life into this form of art. He had followers in Laxminarain Misra, Udaya Shanker Bhatt, Hari Krishna Premi and Seth Govind Das.

Besides full-length plays, the art of one-act plays has been taken up by successful writers like Upendranath "Ashk," Ganesh Prasad Dwivedi and Bhogneshwar. These one-act plays seek to find a solution for our social problems and communal disparity. The allegorical play, *Jyotsna*, by Pandit Sumitra Nandan Pant is a unique creation in Hindi. In spite of the advent of the cinema, lovers of Hindi have not lost zest for the drama as a form of literary art.

#### THE NOVEL AND SHORT STORY :—

The novels and short stories of the nineteenth century were comedies of situations only. Devkinandan Khatri and Kishori Lal Goswami could give us only surprises and thrills in situations but had no insight into human psychology. A few translations from Bengali and English did bring about a change in the technique of novels and short stories, as in drama, but they did not go far towards creating new models. A real contribution was made, however, by Munshi Prem Chand, who with his masterly pen drew pictures of our village life, and portrayed human emotions and characters truly. With social idealism Prem Chand brought the entire wealth of his experience to a real description of rural life. He entered deep into the hearts of village folk, and sought earn-

estly for a solution of their problems. His *Sevasadan*, *Premashram*, *Rangabhumi*, *Ghaban*, and *Karmabhumi* are brilliant pictures of our society, and of the struggle of the down-trodden against the fat and selfish Shylocks of the community, the bureaucracy, and the State. His last work *Godan* ranks among the best novels in Hindi. His Hori is the exemplary character who sacrifices his innocent life for the tyrant of society. Prem Chand stands out among Indian writers not only as a great novelist but also as a lawgiver. His novels and short stories have been translated into many Indian and foreign languages. He was followed by Dadarshan, Chatur-sen Shastri, Jeyanandra Kumar, Bishambhar Nath Sharma, Kaushik, Bhagwati Charan Verma and others who composed many valuable problem and psychological novels. Brindaban Lal Varma developed the historical novel, and today he stands out as the best historical novelist in Hindi. These novelists have brought about refinement in short stories as well, and both novels and short stories have been simultaneously raised by them to a higher standard of perfection.

#### ESSAYS AND CRITICISM :—

In the field of the Essay and Literary Criticism, Hindi literature has attained a high standard. Pandit Mahabir Prasad Dwivedi was the first essayist in Hindi, but his essays can be described merely as good journalistic notes. But in the pages of the *Saraswati*, there appeared some very good specimens of essays written by Madhava Prasad, Adhyapak Purnasingh, Padayma Singh Sharma and Shyam Sunder Dass. The best essayist of the twentieth century was Pandit Ram Chandra Shukla who introduced psychological studies in his essays which were published under the name *Chintamani*. He held out a model for essay-writing both in matter and in form, and there were a number of writers who followed suit. Among them Padama Lal Baxi, Hazari Prasad Dwivedi and Dharendra Verma occupy an important place. These essays paved the way for literary criticism, which has surpassed all other forms of essay-writing. Critical studies in Hindi literature have appeared in two forms. First, as articles on different authors and different tendencies in literature, and second, as critical studies of the history of literature itself. The first type appeared mostly in magazines and journals,

and was published later in the form of books. Different critics tended to devote themselves to a study of special authors and have contributed to the critical side of Hindi literature. The work of Mata Prasad Gupta on Tulsidas, presented in the form of a thesis for the D. Litt. Degree in the University of Allahabad, can be said to be a good specimen of this. The studies in the history of Hindi Literature by Dr. Warshney and Dr. Lal also provide excellent material. The second form of critical studies began with the publication of Mishra Bandhu Vinod's *History of Hindi Literature* from the earliest times to the modern age. Another book, *Hindi Novratana*, which contains the study of nine epoch-making poets, was well received by the scholars of Hindi. Ram Chandra Shukla and Shyam Sunder Dass wrote a history of Hindi literature which can be said to form a landmark in this field.

The study of language has also attracted scholars in recent years. The work of Dr. Dhirendra Varma in *Hindi Bhasha Ka Itihas*, or the History of the Hindi Language, is of great importance. Dr. Babu Ram Saxena wrote an introductory book on Philology, the science of language. This side of Hindi literature is, however, rather scanty and more work has to be done.

#### USEFUL LITERATURE :—

The volume of work on useful literature has considerably increased in the twentieth century. The literature so far published may be classified in three categories. First, on the study of those branches of knowledge which have existed in India from the earliest times and during the middle ages. Among these there are works on Philosophy, Logic and Religion. The important writers are Baldeo Upadhyaya, Ramdass Gaur and Sampurnanand. The second category is of studies on branches of knowledge acquired under Western influence. Such are works on scientific subjects such as Physics and Chemistry, and the Social Sciences. In the former, Dr. Satya Prakash, Dr. Gorakh Prasad, Mr. Mahabir Prasad Srivastava and Mr. Shri Charan are important writers; in the latter, Mr. Sampurnanand, Pt. Daya Shanker Dube, Mr. Gulab Rai and Dr. Bhagwandas occupy a prominent place. The third category contains works on subjects

which have become of great importance in recent years, *e. g.*, International Politics and Religion, History and Travel, and Foreign Exchange. The important writers of this category are Rahul Sankrityan, Jeyachand Vidyaalankar, Dr. Beni Prasad and Dr. Laxmi Chand Jain. There has been an attempt to coin scientific and technical words in Hindi on the basis of Sanskrit roots. In this connection the name of Sukh Sampati Rai Bhandari is first.

#### BIOGRAPHY AND AUTOBIOGRAPHY : .

Although Biography has been transmitted to us from early times, when the saints of Pushtimarga wrote life-sketches of Vaishnava devotees, yet this form of literature did not find much development in Hindi. The physical life, being held to be transitory, could never attract our poets and writers sufficiently for them to enshrine it in literature. In the twentieth century Pt. Banarsi Dass Chaturvedi wrote a biographical sketch of Satya Narain Kavi Ratna, but he could not rally much interest round it. Pt. Ram Naresh Tripathi wrote his reminiscences of his stay with Malaviaji for thirty days. A few articles on biography appeared in the commemoration volumes dedicated to Mahatma Gandhi and Pt. Mahabir Prasad Dwivedi. *Premchand Ghar-men*, a recent work on the life of Prem Chand has been written with success by Shivrani Premchand.

Like biographical literature, autobiography is also scanty in Hindi. Except for the autobiographies of Shyam Sunder Dass and Ayodhya Singh Upadhyaya, the latter being yet incomplete—Hindi is very poor in autobiographies. Those of Mahatma Gandhi and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru have of course been translated into Hindi, but they are after all only translations.

In the end it can be said that Hindi literature during the four and a half decades of it reviewed in these pages, has come to acquire what it did not possess in the few centuries preceding. From the time of Pt. Mahabir Prasad Dwivedi, when new experiments were made in prose, poetry and literary criticism, we have now reached the age of Pandit Ram Chandra Shukla, Shri Jaya Shanker Prasad, Pandit Sumitra Nandan Pant, and Pandit Hazari Prasad Dwivedi, when poetry and prose have been successfully utilised to portray

the human mind in all its various aspects. Poetry with its soft and musical notes gives us psychological pen-pictures of the healthy emotions of man, and literary criticism with its progressive outlook gives us a revaluation of our literature. Beginning with the romances of Pt. Kishori Lal Goswami we have reached the age of Prem Chand and Yashpal, where the Hindi novel is searching its pattern among the works of D. H. Lawrence and Romain Rolland. The Hindi drama has attained maturity in the genius of Shri Jayashanker Prasad, and is finding expression also in one-act plays of various types. It has passed the age of imitating Ibsen and Shaw, and is on the quest for new dramatic values. Recently, there have been attempts to collect folk-songs and ballads, which reflect our culture and civilization in simple and unequivocal style. The name of Pandit Ram Naresh Tripathi may be mentioned in this connection. Numerous literary magazines like the *Saraswati*, the *Madhuri*, the *Hans*, and the *Vishal Bharata* have come into existence to provide scope for literary talent.

Today Hindi is being hailed from all sides as the *lingua franca* of India. Its simple and scientific construction has won it universal admiration. It is capable of adjusting itself to the needs of the time. There have been, of course, certain problems and difficulties regarding its fiction and its script in recent years, but we are happy that they are being solved by great leaders like Mahatma Gandhi on the one hand and Shri Purshotam Das Tandon on the other. Let us hope for the best, which is yet to come.

## 6. KANNADA

By V. K. GOKAK

Principal V. K. Gokak, M. A. (Bombay), B. A. (Oxon.), of Visnagar College in Baroda State is a well-known Kannada poet and playwright, with numerous volumes to his credit. Among them may be mentioned his Kannada social drama *Jananayaka* (Leader of Men) and his *Samudra Geetagalu* (Songs of the Sea).

\* \* \*

Kannada Literature came under the spell of the new movement of thought and life towards the close of the nineteenth century. The signs of a new literary ferment were perceptible as early as the fifties of that century in the writings of a few scholars and Christian missionaries. Historical, literary and biographical study on modern lines began with the publication of *The Epigraphica Carnatica* and also the *Kavicharite* volumes which give a chronological survey of the lives and writings of Kannada writers. Kittel's *Kannada-English Dictionary* opened up, for literary aspirants, the vast resources that the Kannada language had accumulated for over a thousand years. The *Kavya Kalanidhi* publications made available to the reading public the treasures of ancient Kannada poetry. The Karnatak Vidya Vardhaka Sangha, the premier cultural institute of North Karnatak, was started in Dharwar, and conducted a journal called *Vagbhushana* as its literary mouthpiece. The æsthetic crystallisation of the new consciousness took place on a grand scale in the *Ramashwamedha* of Muddana, the morning star heralding the coming glory. *Ramashwamedha* is a "novel" epic—a traditional legend enshrined in a framework which is new because of the vision of life presented in it—the love of Mud-dana the narrator and Manorama, his wife, whose dialogue

makes us realise that here we have a Kannada Benedick and a Kannada Beatrice.

Scholars and poets like Karibasava Shastry, S. G. Narasimhachar, V. R. Katti, Tooramari, Mulabagal, Santa Kavi, B. Ramarao, H. Narayanarao, Panje Mangesharao, Muliye Timmappa, Venkatarao Alur and Mudavidu facilitated the transition from the older modes of thought and composition to the new. Special mention must be made of B. Venkatachar and V. T. Galaganath who created a large reading public for Kannada by producing attractive fiction by way of adaptation as well as original contribution. Kerur is another pioneer of genius. Some of these veterans are happily still with us and are enriching the life of the province by their cultural activity and literary production. The Renaissance was rightfully inaugurated in the Kannada land with the founding of the Kannada Literary Academy in 1914.

The literature of knowledge is growing steadily in Kannada. *Prabudha Karnataka*, the Mysore University *Prachara Mala*, the Samyukta Karnataka Trust *Minchina Balli* and other publishing concerns are bringing to light articles and books on the physical and social sciences. The following writers call for special mention in their respective fields: M. H. Krishna, K. G. Kundanagar, R. S. Panchamukhi, Govind Pai and others for their contributions to archæology and epigraphy; R. Narasimhachar, Basawanal, D. L. Narasimhachar, S. B. Joshi, M. P. Pujar, P. B. Desai and others in philology; C. Vasudevaia, Alur, R. H. Deshpande, Rajpurohit and P. B. Desai in history; S. Krishnasharma, V. Sitaramiah, G. Walwekar and other journalists in economics; R. R. Diwakar, Vadeyar Doreswami Iyengar, Krishnaswami and K. Joshi in political science; and Puranik and Savanur in physics.

Devadu, Hoyasala, Karanth and Rajaratnam, some of our leading men of letters, have also identified themselves closely with children's literature. Special literature has been produced for adult education under the patronage of the Mysore Government. The B. S. Mandala of Mangalore has produced a number of story-books for children. *Makkla-Pustaka* is a journal specially edited for children.

The collection of folk ballads and songs, inaugurated by

D. R. Bendre and Madhura Channa, has now been taken up in all parts of the province, and forms an integral part of the Kannada Renaissance.

Journalism has reached a high standard of presentation in *Vishwa-karnataka*, *Samyukta Karnataka*, *Rashtra Bandhu* and a few other weeklies and dailies.

Modern Kannada Poetry came into its own in the second decade of this century. It has already to its credit an output which it would be hard to excel. B. M. Srikantia's *English Geetagalu* was the gauntlet of the new movement. Srikantia rendered into Kannada a number of Golden Treasury lyrics. Though they were translations, his renderings had the strength of their originals. One feels the divine touch of songs in many of them. This volume is also a treasure-house of new metres for the young poet. Srikantia was able to inspire several young men to poetic endeavour. He himself is a master of the Ode in Kannada and attains sublimity in the intricate harmony of compositions like *The Kannada Flag*, *The Vision of the Kannada Mother* and *Shukra Geeta*. Affectionate tributes were paid to Srikantia from all parts of the province a few years ago on the occasion of his sixtieth birthday.

D. V. Gundappa's *Vasanta Kusumanjali* contains many lyrics of haunting beauty. But his most characteristic achievement is his *Song of Manku Timma*, a philosophic poem, in which one finds an integral expression of his personality. He pours into it all his passionate idealism, his apprehension of "The Burden of the Mystery," his rich practical wisdom and realism. It is the *Rubaiyat* of Gundappa, and unquestionably the greatest philosophical poem in modern Kannada.

Masti's *Aruna* (Dawn) and *Binnaha* (Solicitation) are collections of fine lyrics and songs. His *Malara* contains sonnets of address and devotion. Masti's lyricism is seen at its best in poems like *The Lotus* which have a remarkable simplicity of diction and the grave beauty of recollected emotion. His genius finds its fullest expression in lyrical ballads like *Gaudara Malli* and *Rama Navami*. One is reminded of a Kannada *Hart-Leap Well* and a Kannada *Ancient Mariner* as one reads these poems. Blank verse as a medium

for narrative verse is Masti's innovation. *Navaratri*, his recent collection of narrative poems, is one more illustration of his genius as a story-writer. In poems in which the medium is seen to be inevitable, as in *Musalamma* and *The Story of Barakur*, the verse-story, which is often a dubious form, justifies itself.

Panje Mangesh Rao is known by the lyric movement of his *South Wind* and the *Song of the Kodagas*. His enthusiasm for poetry and his own charming lyrics may be said to have turned the poetic tide in South Kanara. M. N. Kamat's *Queen of Tulunadu* is also a lyric of grace and distinction.

Govind Pai is our neo-classicist in song. The austere grace of his poetry is something unique in Kannada. His diction, like B. M. Srikantia's, derives its purity and strength from the "cloths of gold" woven by the Kannada poets through the centuries. His *Nanda Deepa* (Light Perpetual) has about it the grave beauty and tenderness of *In Memoriam* and his *Golgotha*, which is in blank verse, has the epic dignity and classical grace of *Sohrab and Rustum*.

D. R. Bendre is the "wizard" of modern Kannada poetry. His *Gari* (Feathers), *Murthi* (Icon), *Nadaleele* (Song-Sport), *Uyyale* (Swing) and *Sakhi-geeta* (Song for the Beloved) are collections to which the blood tingles in our veins as we read them. Almost all the lyric forms are made to hold this gift of imperishable song. His diction is as complex as the melody of his verse, and words sanctified by ancient usage as well as those countenanced by the spoken standard of the day mingle harmoniously in it. His rendering and continuation of *Meghaduta* rival Kalidasa on his own ground, as does Masti's story-sequel to *Shakuntala*. There can be no poetic music more haunting than Bendre's, no symbolism and imagery lovelier than his, and no response more integral than the one evoked in the reader by his poetry. The harmony of the instinctive being with the intuitive, of the intellectual with the imaginative, is and can be nowhere better achieved than in his poems. In poems of art like *O Song*, in cosmic lyrics like *The Bird of Time*, *The Dance Eternal* and *Earth*—the *Girlish Wife*, in symbolic poems like *The Icon* and *Chinta*, in national songs like *Thirty-three Crores* and *Man-Sacrifice*, in socialistic lyrics like *The Bag of a*

*Morsel, Food—the Eleventh Incarnation* and *Blind Gold Is A-dancing*, in love-lyrics like *Sakhi-Gita* and in philosophic lyrics like *The Sword of Life*, Bendre may be said to have climbed to the top of the poetic mountain.

Sali's *Chitra Srushti* (Picture-World) is a charming collection of lyrics and narrative poems. His *Tilanjali* is an elegy of rare tenderness and beauty. His *Abhisarika* is an exquisite story told with grace and power. The beauty of Nature and of the human heart, the inexplicability of human misery, love of the Motherland—these are the themes that inspire him to sing.

Khanolkar's *Pleasure-Boating* and *Song of Karnataka* have a haunting music about them. K. Betigeri is another poet of this decade who writes with distinction and grace. His *Words of Mudda* and *The Companion* are collections of fine lyrics. The first is a collection of child-lyrics which have also a deeper suggestiveness. The second contains love-lyrics and patriotic lyrics some of which are set to popular tunes. R. R. Diwakar's *Antaranga* is a volume of genuine devotional lyrics in prose.

The outburst of song in Kannada towards the close of the third decade of this century was something phenomenal. Collections like *Modest Gift*, *Foliage*, *The Bird Is on the Wing*, *Our Poems* (Mitra Mandali), *Star*, etc. showed that the example of the seniors in the field had not been in vain. A number of young men suddenly burst out singing,—a consanguineous display of genius and talent as during the romantic period in English poetry. Each one of these would have been regarded as a major voice by himself had it not been for the splendid chorus in which their voices are so exquisitely blended.

K. V. Puttappa is a spontaneous singer who has produced an enormous quantity of verse. All of it has flow and shows a rare command over diction. Some of it, like *Men of Letters*, *The Deserted Village*, *Raktakshi* and *The Tempest*, is derivative in inspiration and borrows its ideas, or imagery and phrasing, or both, from English poetry. In poems like *Heere Blossom* it is only the root-idea that is derivative. In others, like *The Pied Piper of Bammanahalli*, the borrowing amounts virtually to adaptation. But even his derivative

poetry has about it a spontaneous felicity which almost compensates for its lack of originality. Part of his poetry is charmingly experimental like *The Kokil* and *Soviet Russia*. It attains perfection now and then as in the Ganesha songs. In his collections like *Flute* and *Panchajanya* one comes across poems of haunting beauty,—*Spring*, *Lalitadri Hill*, *Imagination*, *the Maiden Beautiful*, etc. The beauty of Nature and of Art moves him to ecstasy and he is at his best in poems dealing with these themes. The limpidity of his verse, the transparent simplicity of his diction achieved when he is not making an "effort" to write in a learned or florid style, and the spontaneity and simple and authentic idealism which animate his poetry have made it immensely and deservedly popular. His *Chitrangada* is a long narrative romance which contains passages of moving beauty along with much that is experimental,—like the epic similes. Puttappa has recently undertaken retelling the story of the *Ramayana* in blank verse.

V. Sitaramiah, with his *Songs*, *Light and Shadow* and *Lights*, is another gifted singer. His poetry is distinguished by a singular loftiness of conception, purity of thought and felicity of expression. Spontaneity is here governed by the laws of chastened restraint. There is a new melody in it because of a wonderful blending, almost in every poem, of poetic rhythm and music. His is the poetry of tender recollection as in *The Way of the Fountain Lake*, of exquisite melancholy and longing as in *Welcoming the Bride*, of an Arnoldian pause at the parting of the ways as in *To What Gods?*, of moving patriotism as in *Heaven, Earth and Hell*, and of chastened devotion as in *All My Hopes*. He is also the seer of higher realities, as in *Fear Not*.

Rajaratnam is more versatile and the novelty of form and diction in his poetry, along with a philosophy that is a balanced combination of idealism and realism, made it very popular. His poetry is spectacular, if only because it chooses to dress its lyrical content now and then in the gorgeous robes of rhetoric and the colourfulness of Browningian rhymes. His *Songs of Ratna* are imagined as emanating from a drunkard who conveys the poet's indignation against injustice and anomaly in society. Colloquial language is used in them as

the vehicle of lyrical poetry,—and with great success. His *Purusha-Saraswati* ( Male Minerva ) uses the Anglo-Kannada medium for a satire on pedantry. In all these innovations, Rajaratnam owes much to T. P. Kailasam, a study of whose epoch-making plays he has recently presented to the Kannada public. Rajaratnam has also produced other charming lyrics.

P. T. Narasimhachar's lyrics offer a beautiful blending of East and West,—of Kalidasa and Wordsworth. In his meditations on Nature he invariably revives in himself the mythopoetic imagination of our ancient seers, as in *Dawn*. In poems like *The Mango Foliage* is seen the chiselled grace of form for which his poetry is noted,—the Miltonic capacity of giving language the weight and dignity of solid blocks of gold.

Kadengodlu shines equally well in lyric and in narrative. His *We are Floating on the Waves of the Ocean of Time* is a fascinating lyric. *The Marriage of Honni* is a great lyrical ballad. His masterpiece is *The Funeral Pyre of Madri* which has an epic royalty of diction. It displays a harmonious fusion of both classical and romantic qualities.

Madhura Chenna is the Blake of modern Kannada song, a Blake without his obscurity and incoherence. His songs are songs of the eternal quest, centring round the quest of the Ultimate in *My Lover*, and of friendship and love in *Madhura Geeta*. His *Rise, O Mother Earth* is a haunting, cosmic lyric. The very simplicity of his diction becomes a radiant garment for his spirit and his poems are distinguished by a universality of appeal in spite of their mystical content. Both Bendre and Chenna are influenced by Sri Aurobindo's philosophy.

Gokak's *Kalopasaka* is a collection of long poems that are lyrical in texture and narrative or dramatic in form. They are distinguished by their dream-imagery and by the presentation of such themes as Beauty, the gulf between the ideal and the actual, the clash of force and personality, love and motherhood. His *Payana* ( Journey ) is a collection of lyrics composite in rhythm and theme, varying from simple lyrics like *Forest and Mind* to intricate patterns like *The Song of the Motherland*, *The Song of Life*, *To a Friend* and *To Beauty*. His *Sea-Songs* is a collection which has nov-

elty both of form and of substance. Free verse is used here for the first time as a medium of poetry in Kannada and the poems reveal the sea in all its moods, as also Asia, Africa and Europe and the tremendous conflicts with which they seethe. His *Akasha Ganga* (The Milky Way) is a song of the soul in the manner of Wordsworth's *Prelude*. His *In Life's Temple*, published in parts, is a portrait gallery somewhat resembling Chaucer's *Prologue* and Browning's *Men and Women*, but differing from them in that the portraits, ranging from the child to the saint, yield progressively a consistent and comprehensive philosophy of life. It is an attempt, like the epic, at mirroring what is eternal and infinite, in the lineaments of a particular age.

Mugali's *Basiga* (Garland) is a collection of fine lyrics revealing a mind highly sensitive to the beauty and agony of life. His *Chataka* is a subtle and enchanting lyric depicting in moving imagery the languors of a divine longing. His flower-poems are tender and lovely. *Bombay* is a complex ode expressing the challenge of the modern poet to an industrial age. His poem on the beauty of *Sahyadri* is another sustained lyric with an intricate pattern. In poems like *The Peacock of the New Age*, *Bharata Hunnime* and *Every Soul*, we see how the mother-tongue, the Motherland, Nature, the cosmic law and the horror and misery of life move him to the lilt of the lyric and the rapture of song. Krishna Kumar, S. G. Kulkarni (*My Songs*) and others are also poets of this decade with an individual note.

Other poets are fast coming up. P. Sadashiva Rao who gave us at least two great poems,—*Dance* and *The Invitation to Varuna*—died prematurely in Italy, the country that claimed the remains of England's Shelley and Keats. Narasimha Murthy is an accomplished poet of love. Pandeshwar's lyrics are distinguished by their emotional, metrical and stylistic grace. Parameshwar Bhat, Raghava and Datta Murthy are also singers with an individual note. R. V. Jagirdar, one of our leading dramatists, has published a collection of poems which are mainly satirical and "reformist" in import, like the lyrics in Srinivasa Murthy's *The Poet's Defeat*. A group of young "progressive" writers have published a collection called *Rasarishi*. A few of them, like

Archik and Kavyanand, are promising. Several others, like B. H. Shridhara, G. Adiga, Bhupalam, Yekkundi and V. G. Bhat are also producing poems of quality.

The Kannada novel, which began with Muḍramanjusha and a translation of Bana's *Kadambari*, and was popularised by journals like *Sadbodha Chandrika*, *Sadguru* and *Jaya Karnataka*, is being enriched by several publishing concerns and *malas*. The Manohara Grantha Mala has published a hundred books, several of which are novels. Remarkable work in the field of the historical novel has been done by Galaganath, Kerur, K. Betigeri, P. B. Desai and others. M. S. Puttanna heralded the advent of realism in the Kannada novel in the early years of this century. His *As You Sow, So You Reap* is a powerful representation of middle-class Kannada life. Kerur's *Indira* and V. M. Tatti's *Guru Prasada* are also social novels heralding a new era. Most of the genres of the novel have, by now, been assimilated in Kannada,—the novel of manners as in *Sudarsana*, *Dharma Sere* and *Gramapanchanana* (Village-Lion), of character as in A. N. Krishna Rao's *Sandhya Raga* (Twilight) and Gokak's *Ijjodu* (Disparity) and of satire as in Karanth's *Devadutaru* and Kasturi's *Galigopura* (Air-Cupola). The regional novel finds an apt illustration in K. V. Puttappa's *Kanura Subbamma*, the psychological novel in Devadu's *Antaranga* (Heart's Core) and H. P. Joshi's *Mavina Topu* (Mango Grove), the period novel in Karanth's *Maruli Mannige* (Back to the Soil), the problem novel in Mugali's *Baluri* (Life's Fire) and *Karana Purusha* (Messiah) and the "stream of consciousness" novel in R. V. Jagirdar's *Vishvamitra Srushti* (Topsy-turvy World). What is now awaited is the "epic" novel of the type of *War and Peace*. The *Subbamma* and *Mannige* of Puttappa and Karanth are ambitious efforts attaining some complexity, the former by blending "regional" features with "manners," and the latter, with "period" and "character." Luckily or unluckily for Kannada, the detective novel has not made any headway as yet, but for one or two efforts (R. V. Jagirdar's *The Ghost of Bharamappa*). But many original novels of incident are published every year. There are a few novels, like Karanth's *Bettadajeera* and Kasturi's *Chakra Drushti*,

which are distinguished by novelty of technique.

Karanth and A. N. Krishna Rao have written several interesting novels. Karanth is usually interested in exploring peculiar social problems as in *The Life of a Courtesan* and *That Mother Brought Forth*. His *Sarasammana Samadhi* is an excellent novel of character and his *Chomana Dudi*, which depicts the life, the agony and the consolation of a son of the soil, attains sublimity, like Masti's *Subbanna*. That Choma is a Harijan adds to the tragic keenness of the situation. Karanth's art as a novelist is many-sided and his depth and range are remarkable.

A. N. Krishna Rao's *Mangala Sutra* is a fine novel of character. Krishna Rao is at his best when he does not interfere deliberately with the processes of his art. But whereas Karanth contents himself with delineating abnormal attitudes and leaving them to work out their own destiny, for good or evil, Krishna Rao is interested in taking sides. This is what makes his sympathetic portraits of "unconventional" artists in *Udaya Raga* and *Sahitya Ratna* unconvincing and even untenable. How "lapses" can be theorised into "creeds" and made to mar an otherwise engaging picture of life is seen in *The Pilgrimage of Life*. Krishna Rao has recently been interested in promoting "progressive" writing. It is expected that this will give a new turn to his creative work.

N. K. Kulkarni's *In the Folds of Death* is a professional novel depicting the moments of joy and of vicissitude in the life of a clerk. The central sanity of the novel makes it a welcome production. Kadengodlu, S. G. Kulkarni, K. Srinivasa, Burli, M. V. Sitaramia, R. V. Srinivasa, T. R. Subbarao and others have also produced interesting works. R. Vyasa Rao, Gurunath Joshi, V. M. Inamdar, Chulki, G. B. Joshi, Nagaraja, Narayana Sharma, Mevundi, Halleppa and Sangam are providing the reading public with excellent translations from English and from various Indian languages.

The short story is cultivated more extensively in Kannada. Panje, M. N. Kamat and Kerur wrote stories of merit but without the rigours of the form. Masti is the first short-story writer in Kannada in the strict sense of the term. He is also the best. There is a variety of theme, motive and

technique in his stories which it is hard to excel. *Subbanna* is a long, short story which Longinus would have called sublime. His *Back from Hemakuta*, *The Last Days of the Poet* and *Wife of the Master* show what depths of the human heart he can sound. Humour that is a Lambian blending of tears and smiles, satire that is so skilful that the knife is lost in the wound, fascinating lyricism, great wisdom and deep insight into the heart of the simple peasant as well as the mystic,—these have made and will make Masti one of the greatest short-story writers in the country. He is equally at home in philosophic stories like *The Last Days of Sari Putra*, patriotic stories like *Vasumatti*, historical stories like *Rani of Nijagal* and stories of folk life like *Mosarina Mangamma*. "C. R." translated one of his stories into English. Masti himself has issued his translations of his own stories into English, in four volumes.

There is a whole galaxy of brilliant short-story writers in Kannada today. K. Betigeri has given inimitable stories of village life. Gopala Krishna Rao's *Golden Zone* and other collections reveal rare humanity, wisdom and tenderness. Ananda has worked on a few inches of ivory—on the themes of love and friendship—but within these limits his art has attained perfection. Gorur in his *Village Vignettes*, *Æsthetes of Our Village* and other collections has almost given us an epic of feudalism in its transitional, rural aspects—an epic that is full of wonderful humour and pathos. Krishna Kumar in his *Monkey's Procession* and *Life* has produced stories of rare psychological subtlety and lyricism. H. P. Joshi's art, as revealed in his stories, is of the suggestive and symbolic type.

The women writers of this period have favoured the short story more than any other literary form. Of these, Mrs. Gouramma was a writer of genius whose contributions were cut short by premature death. Her approach is mostly psychological. There are several other distinguished women story writers like Kalyanamma, Shyamala, Mrs. Karanth, Mrs. Jaya Laxmi and others.

Among writers who have made a name in other fields but have also contributed considerably to this form, mention may be made of D. R. Bendre with his stories of rare tender-

ness and wisdom, A. N. Krishna Rao with his enthusiasm for a new social pattern, Mugali, whose *Dream-Beloved* is an intense, romantic story-lyric, Rajaratnam with his *Drops* (short stories) and C. K. V. with his village-stories classically designed.

Kshirasagara and Sri Swamy are story-writers of distinction. Two recent collections, those of L. Bendre and Kattimani (*Caravan*) sound a new note,—that of a new social awareness with all its political implications present distinctly in the background. Some of L. Bendre's stories deal with the "August" disturbances of 1942. Kattimani's *Caravan* centres round the recent Bijapur famine and gives a ghastly picture of starvation in all its tragic hideousness. Several stories which have a bearing on the economic and political situation of the day are appearing in some of our journals. Collections like *Peacock Plumes* and *Rainbow* reveal the richness and diversity of the modern Kannada story, apart from numerous translations from other languages. Short stories of incident, character, sentiment, thought, atmosphere and psychology,—all these are found in Kannada. Almost all the possible ways open to a narrator are being explored by our writers. All told, this is one of the most fruitful departments of modern Kannada literature.

*Yakshaganas* maintained the dramatic and histrionic tradition in Karnataka without a break. The translation of plays from Sanskrit and English into Kannada began towards the end of the last century. Karibasava Shastry, Mulabagal and Kerur represent this effort at its best. It is being continued and augmented today by capable men like S. G. Shastry, A. N. Murthy Rao, Madhura Chenna, L. Gundappa and others.

The *Puranic* or legendary play held the stage in the beginning. The earlier production in this line strikes us by its quantity rather than its quality. The demands of the popular theatre and the study were probably met for the first time by the plays of Garuda Sadasivarao,—*Paduka Pattabhisheka*, *Chouti Chandrama* and others. Emboldened by his success, Sadasiva Rao also produced social plays like *Vishama Vivaha* ( Ill-Matched Marriage ) and a historical play called *Echama Nayaka*. All these plays are eminently readable and they

were immensely popular on the stage.

The advent of the cinema has checked the growth of the drama in this direction. Though the popular theatre continues to exist, the later significant developments in drama have been mostly the concern of amateurs. The legendary play is seen at its best in works like C. K. Venkata Ramayya's *Mandodari*, Kadengodlu's *Hidimba*, V. Sitaramiah's *Sohrab and Rustum* and H. P. Joshi's *Rajavallabha*, in which there is an attempt at humanising and psychologising the theme. Mudavidu's *Prema Bhanga* (Thwarted Love) is written on classical lines.

The historical play has mostly preserved its literary status. D. V. Gundappa's *Vidyaranya* is modern in planning and design, though traditional in form. Masti's *Talikote*, dealing with the fall of the Vijayanagara Empire, is a powerful tragedy on Shakespearian lines. Samsa's *Vigada Vikrama Raya* and *Suguna Gambheera* show that he is a first-rate dramatist, one who possesses Shakespeare's poetic and dramatic apprehension of character, plot and atmosphere. His premature death by suicide was a calamity for Kannada. R. V. Jagirdar's *Pulakesi* and Mugali's *Nihale* are also interesting historical plays. Mugali's *Akka Mahadevi* is a biographical historical play offering an imaginative interpretation of the life and personality of a twelfth-century Kannada saint, based on her own available writings.

The social play may be said to begin with T. P. Kailasam, in all its realistic setting. Kailasam is a genius and his plays can be compared with the best in any language. His stay in England enabled him to give his plays a highly modernised technique and the classical rigour and severity of Ibsen. His subtle blending of realism and idealism, of humour and satire, of lyric and dramatic movement, and of the typical and the individual in characterisation is indeed marvellous. His plays range from extremely clever parodies of old-fashioned plays like *Shurpanakha* through a scathing presentation of the evils in our educational, social, political and religious systems as in *Tollu Gatti* (Hollow and Solid), *Poli Kittu* (Truant Kitti), *Home Rule* and *Who Is in the Wrong?* to tragedies written in poetic prose in English, which are darker than night, like *Purpose*, *Fulfilment* and *Karna*. Rightly did Dr. J. H.

Cousins remark after witnessing a performance of *Tollu Gatti* that one felt hopeful about the future of the Indian drama. The coruscations of wit that shine through the Anglo-Kannada medium that he uses for most of his plays (for this is part of the hybridism that characterises the Indian bourgeoisie) are something unsurpassed, even if equalled. His characters range from the scoundrels trying to outwit one another in *Snake-hole within Hole* to the ancient patterns of virtue like the mother in *Hollow and Solid*, and the modern as in *Poli Kitti*. The sixtieth anniversary of Kailasam's birthday was celebrated in Bangalore a few months ago and the whole of the Kannada land paid its affectionate tributes to him.

The social play in North Karnataka began with Huyilgol's *Shikshana Sambhrama*. It is a play charmingly written, though old-fashioned in technique. *Tirukara Pidugu* (The Epidemic of Beggars), the one-act play of D. R. Bendre, the gifted poet, is the first example of the employment of refined colloquial North-Karnatak Kannada in modern drama. He has also written a few other one-act plays giving pictures of contemporary social life,—philosophic as in *Goal*, satirical as in *Rakes* and problem-probing as in *Udhara*.

R. V. Jagirdar (Sri Ranga) is one of our leading dramatists. *Udara Vairagya*, his first play, reveals a certain hesitancy of tone and technique. But his art is seen to evolve gradually, in play after play, till it reaches its most characteristic expression in *Harijanwar* (Tear the Sacred Thread ; The Harijan Week : a pun). Jagirdar exposes the hypocrisy and sordidness of our social life in satirical tones that are devastating ; and creates heroes who stand eminently for a clear-cut and rational approach to the tremendous problems that they have to face. His *Vaidya Raja* and *Daridra Narayana* are magnificent in their satire and denunciation. But there is little attention bestowed on plot-building or characterisation. The whole interest of the writing is concentrated in brilliant dialogue, dialogue which is a fine blending of realism, satire and fantasy. But there is a balance struck in *Harijanwar*, *Sandhya Kala* (Transition-Time) and *Narakadalli Narasimha* (Narsimha in Hell), the last of which is a *tour de force* in fantasy. His one-act plays are perfect as works of art. In plays like *Ahalya* and *Niruttara Kumara* he

turns our legendary lore upside down in order to reveal modern social values. In others like *Ashwa Medha* (The Horse Sacrifice) and *The Defeat of Yama*, he uses it just to add a touch of fantasy to his satirical and humorous handling of contemporary problems. His recent one-act plays show an extension of subject-matter, including as they do such themes as art and the ravages of famine.

Karanth's *Garbhagudi* (The Innermost Shrine) is a play indicting institutional religion in high-wrought rhetoric. His one-act plays like *Dharma Sankata* (Dilemma) and *Fourth Devil* deal with abnormal social abuses and are powerful. Mugali's *Namadhari* is an interesting comedy satirising hankerers after New Year titles. He has also written historical one-act plays like *Vijaya Samrajya* and satirical ones like *The Guest-God*. A. N. Krishna Rao has also written *Ahuti*, a full-length social play and several one-act plays on mythological, historical, social and political themes, like *Anugraha* and *Jwalamukhi*. They are an interesting expression of his indignation against social injustice and political confusion, and some of them are marked by novelty of theme and excellent workmanship. Gokak's *Jananayaka* (Leader of the People) is a full-length tragedy and his *Tulsi* and *Doctor of Literary Criticism* are one-act plays, the latter of which is a pleasant, satirical indictment of exaggeration and want of proportion in contemporary Kannada literature. Setti and a few others have also produced plays on contemporary themes.

The verse-play is a refreshing branch of modern Kannada drama. B. M. Srikantia's *Aswathaman* is unique in that it is a sublime example of the Greek type of tragedy in Kannada. He had, before this, shown his genius in this direction by remodelling *Gadayudha*, the great tenth-century Kannada epic, on the lines of classical tragedy. *Aswathaman* is an independent creation. The scholar, the poet and the dramatist in Srikantia work in wonderful harmony in this play, which is characterised by composite excellence. The ancient Kannada diction of the play, the grace and propriety with which the ancient Indian story is fitted into the Greek pattern of plot as well as characterisation and, above all, the calm and serene way in which the poet's own personality and

philosophy of life throw an enchanting light over the whole, make it a landmark in Kannada literature. Both these plays were staged before select audiences by Bangalore collegians.

K. V. Raghavachar, one of Srikantia's pupils, has translated *Antigone* into Kannada from the original Greek and prefaced his translation with a learned disquisition on the Greek theatre.

The blank-verse play has also been popular with amateurs and with the reading public. Puttappa's adaptations of *The Tempest* and *Hamlet* and D. V. Gundappa's *Macbeth* may be mentioned in this connection. It was in his *Defeat of Yama*, a one-act play, that blank-verse was first used as a dramatic medium. Puttappa has written several effective one-act plays in blank-verse,—*Maharatri*, *Kurukshetra* and *Shudra Tapaswi*. Masti's *Yashodhara* is an outstanding full-length play in this field. The blank-verse of Srinivasa Murthy's *Nagarika* (Townsman) and Puranik's *Bhabruvahana* also shows remarkable strength and energy. Mugali's *Pavana Pavaka* (Sacred Fire) is a collection of verse-plays and Gokak's *Patana* (Fall) and *The Way Unending* are one-act plays in blank-verse.

The song-play is an equally remarkable feature of modern Kannada. Masti's *Usha*, *Shanta* and *Savitri* are one-act plays couched in poetic prose and introducing us to a galaxy of charming heroines. But they also contain many fine songs. His *Tirupani* is a song-play with brief interludes in prose. Karanth's *Mukta Dwara* is a philosophic, lyrical opera combining dance and song. His *Somiya Bhagya* is a tragic opera probing wonderful depths of sadness and gloom. An elemental pity is made to inhere in the story of Somi, the star-crossed forest-girl. His *Somebody Said It* is a comic opera satirising the irresponsibility of modern journalism. P. T. Narasimhachar's *Ahalya* is a fascinating song-play and a re-interpretation built on an ambitious pattern; the lyrical strains in it are charming. Gokak's *Mahasweta* is a masque in blank-verse interspersed with songs.

The one-act play is as outstanding a feature of Kannada as the short story. Several of its exponents have been mentioned already and the variety of its form and substance has been roughly indicated. Gopula Krishna Rao's *Kensington*

*Park* and Bharati's *Tapaswini* are also notable. N. K. Kulkarni is one of the ablest among its younger exponents. His *Bar-Room*, which is a skit on briefless pleaders, has been immensely popular. His other plays reveal the same gentle humour and fantasy at work on various themes. Rajaratnam's *Gandugodali* (Ruthless Axe) is a powerful verse-play. Tengshe (also a fine story-writer), Mansubdar, Kadengodlu, Vaman Bhat, Kshirasagara and others are also among noted writers of one-act plays. Two plays are striking as indicating the socialistic approach,—Ramakant's *Kalki* and Kumara Venkanna's song-play on the awakening of India. The first is a luminous tragedy dealing with mill life and the second contains graceful lyrical and choristic measures. Krishna Kumar, one of our leading story-writers, has also published a collection of interesting one-act plays.

Biography and autobiography have also come into their own in modern Kannada. Apart from translations, which are a feature of almost every department of literature in the Indian languages, there is classical biography, as in D. V. Gundappa's *Gokhale* and R. V. Jagirdar's *Kemal Pasha*, and romantic biography as in Puttappa's *Vivekananda*. Books have also been written on Hitler and Stalin. There are biographies which are partly imaginative because the author has to work on limited material,—like Srinivasa Murthy's *Basavannanavaru*. C. K. Venkata Ramayya is a prominent writer in this field. His biographies of the Prophet Mohammed and of the late Maharaja of Mysore are excellently written. The latter is very well documented and arranged. Biographical sketches by Alur, Chidambaraia, Honnapurmatha Manjappa Hardekar and others are also noteworthy. Neglur's biographical sketch of R. V. Jagirdar may be noted as extending the subject-matter of biography so as to include the contemporary literary scene.

Autobiography is represented by Alur's *Reminiscences* and *From Behind the Prison Bars* by R. R. Diwakar, the famous Congress leader in Karnataka. It is spiritual as in Madhura Chenna's *Prelude*, *Dark Night* and *Dawn*, literary as in Rajaratnam's *Ten Years*, and æsthetic as in Gokak's *Rasanimishagalu* (Moments of Vision). The diary or journal as a literary form is well illustrated by Gokak's *From Beyond*

*the Seas* and Aswatha Narayana Rao's *What It Cost Me*. V. Sitaramiah's *Pampa Yatre* is a delightful contribution to the literature of travel. Gosavi's accounts of his travel in India and Manvi's *Kannada Yatre* are worthy of the tradition set by *Pampa Yatre*.

The essay is another striking department of modern Kannada literature. The treatise and the article, with which the history of the modern Kannada essay began, have now grown all-inclusive and embrace all topics under and beyond the sun. Pen-pictures or character-sketches have developed into an attractive genre by themselves. D. R. Bendre's sketches of Alur and Manjappa set the tone in this field. S. Sharma has now made it peculiarly his own by giving wonderfully vivid pen-pictures of literary men like D. R. Bendre himself and Kailasam, and of our great national leaders like Mahatma Gandhi, Nehru, Mr. Naidu and others in books like *Scions of the Race* and *Vardha Yatre*. A brilliant and incisive style and great penetrative and interpretative power make him one of the most gifted and effective penmen in Kannada. He has almost founded a new dynasty of style in modern Kannada prose. S. S. Malwad, Bhardwaj and others have also cultivated this type.

The personal essay is found at its best in collections like *Gossip* and *Flashes and Glimpses*. V. Sitaramiah, M. G. Venkateshia and D. R. Bendre were among the first to acclimatise this form in Kannada. D. R. Bendre's essays are characteristic expressions of his rare wisdom, humour and dialectical subtlety. Many of those mentioned in the section on poetry have written personal essays. An outstanding collection is A. N. Murthy Rao's *Day-Dreams* which exhibit the playful insight of Lamb and the comprehensiveness of Hazlitt. Narayana Bhat's *Kodanda's Lectures* and N. K. Kulkarni's *Mungaluputige* are also delightful.

The descriptive essay is seen at its best in Puttappa's *Pictures of Sahyadri* and the narrative essay in P. T. Narasimhachar's *Feeling-Pictures*. P. Ramanand and Rashi have also given us humorous essays of the narrative type. The satirical essay is illustrated eminently in the pages of R. V. Jagirdar's *Rutusamhara* and other collections. They reveal the impact of the modern mind on the feudal relics and other

anomalies in our society. The epistolary essay has appeared occasionally in journals,—as in Gokak's *Vanamali's Letters* and N. K. Kulkarni's *Letters*. Essays on *Places*, which are a blend of history, geography and cultural survey, have been cultivated by Gokak, Venkata Setti and others, and published in a volume called *Modern Karnataka*.

Literary criticism is well cultivated in Kannada and has quite a significant future. It is mainly an attempt at defining the creed of the new movement, at interpreting the vast treasures of ancient Kannada literature, searching for inspiration in new quarters and synthesising the old and the new. R. Narasimhachar, Venkata Subbia, F. G. Halakatti, Govind Pai, K. G. Kundanagar, Srinivasa Murthy, S. C. Nandimath, Isvamurthy Shastry and D. L. Narasimhachar are mainly interested in editorial and biographical investigation and criticism. B. M. Srikantia, T. S. Venkannia, Krishna Shastry, V. Sitaramiah, Rajaratnam, T. N. Srikantia, M. Timmapia, S. S. Basawanal, R. S. Mugali, D. K. Bhimsenarao, V. G. Kulkarni and others are interpreting ancient and medieval Kannada literature to the public. R. R. Diwakar has written excellent critical treatises on the Upanishads, the Vaishnava poets and the Vachanakaras. D. V. Gundappa, Govind Pai, Rajaratnam and Vasudeva Murthy have introduced the Kannada public to the Pali and Persian literatures. A. N. Krishna Rao has come out with a book on Maxim Gorky. Architecture and art-criticism of quality has also been produced by Venkoba Rao, Karanth and A. N. Krishna Rao. A desire to interpret the ideals of Western literature and to arrive at a synthesis of the East and the West animates the critical writings of B. M. Srikantia, Masti, D. V. Gundappa, D. R. Bendre, S. V. Ranganna, V. Sitaramiah, Gokak, V. M. Inamdar and others. The critical essays of some of the writers mentioned above can vie with the best in Western criticism on the psychological, speculative or judicial side. A section of the criticism which is concerned with a comparative theory of literature, as in parts of Bendre's *Sahitya-Vimarshe*, is an original contribution and deserves to be translated into English or Hindi.

## 7. MAITHILI

By UMESHA MISHRA

Mahamahopadhyaya Dr. Umesha Mishra, M.A., D. LITT., is connected with the Ganganatha Jha Research Institute of the Allahabad University. He is one of three Editors of its learned *Journal*. He is deeply interested also in Maithili literature and concerned for its rightful status.

### I

#### INTRODUCTORY :—

The growth and development of literature was formerly due to the encouragement and influence of a sincere patron. He became a sort of literary nucleus, and attracted creative geniuses round him and encouraged them to put forth their best thoughts in as fine and charming a garb as possible. This is how Sanskrit literature flourished in the past. Mithilā has been a centre of learning and culture from the days of the R̥gvedic ṛṣis. Her rulers, from the great Videha Janaka down to the present Maharajadhiraja Sir Kameshwara Siṅha Bahadur, have been great scholars and lovers of Sanskrit learning. Like the ancient court of Janaka, the modern courts have also been attracting literary persons from far and wide. Maithilā scholars, in the past, gave undivided attention to the study of Sanskrit and did not attach much importance to the study of their mother-tongue. But not everybody was privileged to study and cultivate Sanskrit, and there were many intelligent persons amongst them. So good literature in Maithili sometimes flourished among these. The creative faculty cannot be kept suppressed by any external force. No one can prevent it from blossoming and reaching its prime even in uncultured and unpromising surroundings. Besides, serious scholars of Sanskrit in their hours of recreation delighted to write something in their own mother-tongue.

Thus the modern literature of Mithilā gradually developed, both within the court and outside it, for the last several centuries.

Political and commercial forces have produced little effect on Mithilā and her literature. This is perhaps due to the fact that the Maithilas are mainly devoted to literary, cultural and agricultural pursuits. This may also be the reason why their choice of themes was so limited. They confined themselves to quiet, literary themes in keeping with the aim of entertaining listeners. The old traditional outlook of the Sanskritists continued. They composed dramas in mixed Maithili, Prakrit and Sanskrit. Their poems were either erotic, or devotional and religious in character. Maithilas have been undoubtedly most devotional and religious in their outlook. They could not consider any other aspect of life as worth being sung or depicted. It is only in recent times that they have begun to realise that literature should be a true mirror of society, and have consequently widened their outlook to include every aspect of life.

It is in this light that the growth and development in the twentieth century, of Maithili, the mother-tongue of the present North Bihar, should be viewed. It was once the mother-tongue and the court language of even Nepal. It was also the sweet and melodious language of the great Maithili poet, Vidyāpati, who converted the Bengali devotee and Vaishnava poet, Candīdāsa, and enamoured Caitanyadeva.

#### RENASCENT MITHILA :—

Like all other modern Indian literatures fresh inspiration came to Maithili with the impact of the West, and the consequent new conditions which were first felt under the transfer of the Darbhanga Raj to management under the Court of Wards from 1860 to 1880. The Maharaja Lakshmishwara Simha, who ruled over Mithilā from 1880 to 1898, was a cultured person of great and varied experience. It was he who along with his younger brother, Sir Rameshwara Simha Bahadur, first encouraged English education in Mithilā. His régime infused fresh energy into the social, cultural and literary life of the people. His charming personality, kind treatment, love of scholarship, and unbounded patriotism and generosity

attracted scholars and literary persons from far and wide. There was an all-round awakening in Mithilā. The scholarly atmosphere of the court spread its influence all over the province. The latent creative faculty of the people was aroused, and contributions began to enrich Maithili literature in all its different branches. Some well-known writers of the twentieth century, for instance, Canda Jha, Raghunandana-dasa, Mm. Dr. Sir Ganganatha Jha and his brothers, Vidyā-natha Jha and Gananatha Jha, started their careers during this régime. Thenceforward new literature began to appear on almost all subjects such as philosophy and ethics, history and geography, travel, mathematics, grammar, rhetoric and prosody. Novels, stories and fables were also produced. Separate literature for women and children came into being. The scholars of Mithilā now began to take keen interest in the growth of their own mother-tongue.

#### CENTRES OF NEW LITERATURE :—

Both within and outside the Province enthusiastic Mai-thilas began to work for its enrichment and uplift, and centres were founded in different places. The school of Benares flourished under the expert guidance of Mahamahopadhyaya Muralidhara Jha. Benares has been a centre of learning attracting hundreds of Maithilā Panditas for centuries. They founded an Association to enrich Maithili. A monthly journal, named *Mithilāmoda*, was started in 1906 which succeeded in establishing a tradition and a style of its own. Almost all the later scholars living in Benares, including the present writer, flourished under the influence of this school. The part which this school played to popularise the cause of Maithili cannot be exaggerated.

The next centre to be established was at Darbhanga under the patronage of the Maharajadhiraja, with Mahamahopadhyaya Parameshwara Jha, Canda Jha, Vindhyanatha Jha, Cetanatha Jha, Sir Ganganatha Jha and others as its pioneer workers. It published the *Pārijātaharana* of Umāpati Upādhyāya amongst several other works. In 1907-08 it started a paper *Mithilā-Mihira* which has been doing great service to the cause of the language. It had the co-operation of the court scholars as well as of the public. As it had to labour

under various adverse circumstances it could not take a definite shape for a long time. In its present fight against the negligence and step-motherly treatment meted out by the home University of Patna to Maithili literary effort, it has achieved partial success.

The third school came to be established at Jaipur under the leadership of Vidyavacaspati Madhusudana Jha and Pt. Ramabhadra Jha, the Ex-Judicial Minister of Alwar State. They started a monthly journal named *Maithila-hitasādhana* and did much to popularise Maithili in Rajputana and the Central Provinces. The Maithilas of these Provinces, whose number exceeds thousands, co-operated with this school. It began well, but due to various reasons it could not continue its activities for long.

Then there was another centre at Ajmer with Rama-chandra Mishra of Mathura as the leader. It attracted Maithilas from Aligarh, Mathura, and places near about. *Maithilaprabhā*, *Maithilaprabhākara*, *Maithilabandhu* were the journals published by it from time to time. The activities of this centre have not, however, won the approval of the Maithilas of Mithilā proper and of Benares, who regard their works as not up to the mark.

The pioneer poets of Bengal were inspired by the sweet-ness of Maithili in the 14th and 15th centuries.<sup>1</sup> They composed Bengali poems with the help of Maithili. But Bengalis in their turn have fully repaid their debt by inspiring the Maithilas in modern times to serve the cause of their mother-tongue. Eminent Bengalis, like the late Justice Saradacharan Mitter, Babu Nagendranatha Gupta and several others of today have done immense good to the cause of Maithili studies by their writings and speeches. The late Sir Ashutosh

<sup>1</sup> (a) "Chandidasa's poetry was inspired by Vidyapati and other poets of Mithila."—R. C. Datta.

(b) "Bengali scholars would come back home after finishing their studies in Mithila not only with Sanskrit learning in their head, but also with Maithili songs on their lips—songs of Vidyapati, and also probably by his predecessors and his successors. These were adopted by Bengali people.... The Maithili lyric similarly naturalised itself in Assam and in Orissa in the 15th century...."—Dr. S. K. Chatterji, 4th All-India Oriental Conference *Proceedings*.

Mukerji may be called the patron of Maithili in Calcutta. It was through the efforts of Kumar Gangananda Simha, Babu Gangapati Simha, Pandit Brajamohana Thakura, Vidyananda Thakura and others that a chair for Maithili was founded in the University of Calcutta in 1917 with the generous help of Raja Kirtyananda Simha Bahadur of Banaili. The University recognised Maithili as an independent language for the M. A. examination in 1919. This gave a fresh impetus to the growth and development of Maithili literature. They succeeded in evolving a new type of Maithili script and also published a few works in Maithili. It is through their efforts that today we have a fine edition of the *Varnanaratnākara*, the oldest Maithili prose classic of Jyotirishwara Thakura, by Dr. S. K. Chatterji and Pandit Babuaji Mishra. It is a work which can claim to be the earliest of all in the modern Indian languages of North India.

During the last few years there has been much change in the schools mentioned above. After the death of Mm. Muralidhara Jha in 1929, the centre of activity shifted to the Benares Hindu University which, chiefly owing to the efforts of the local Maithilas led by Kancinatha Jha and Prabodhanarayana Chaudhari, recognised Maithilas as an independent subject for its examinations. They founded an Association called Maithili Sāhitya Samiti in the University with Mm. Balakrishna Mishra as its President, published standard works, and brought out a correct version of a number of poems of Vidyāpati. It is still doing good work, though it does not have the ungrudging support of the Sanskritists, who have founded another association of their own in the city for similar work.

The Darbhanga school has flourished much in recent years. It founded the Maithili Sāhitya Parisad in 1931 with Shashinatha Chaudhari, Bholalaladasa and others as its prominent workers. The late Maharajadhiraja Sir Rameshwara Simha Bahadur took very keen interest in it and gave generous donations to found a chair in the Patna University for higher research work in Maithili. But unfortunately, instead of encouraging the study of Maithili, the authorities of the University have utilised the services of the teacher holding the chair, Dr. Sudhakara Jha, for the teaching of

non-Maithili subjects.<sup>1</sup> The Parisad is publishing a very high standard quarterly journal, called *Sāhityapatra*, under the able editorship of Pandita Ramanatha Jha. The Parisad has been able to raise the level of Maithili literature and has produced many standard works, original as well as in translation, of permanent value. The standard of style propounded by the present writer from the Presidential chair of the Maithili Shaili Conference at Muzaffarpore in 1936 became the pattern of this *Journal*. The present Maharajadhiraja Sir Kameshwara Simha Bahadur, under whose favourable patronage the centre is flourishing, has helped the cause of Maithili in many ways. It is through his personal influence and efforts that the University of Patna has come to recognise the language partially. The atmosphere in the Province has become more favourable, and there are now centres in Madhubani, Muzaffarpore, Patna, Purnea, Bhagalpore, Motihari, Monghyr and several other towns and villages. Maithili script has received new life through the diligent care of Shrinatha Mishra and Jivanatha Raya.

## II

### POETS AND POETRY :—

We may now proceed to describe the achievements of Maithili literature during the present century. Among poets, Bhanunatha Jha, generally known as Bhana Jha, son of Nandana of Pilakhabar, was a very humorous person. Following the old tradition he wrote a *Vātāhvāna* in Maithili. It is written also in Sanskrit. It is a peculiar type of work. The lines are in alphabetical order and describe the race of a crane (*baka*) from one village to another, as it flies over a particular tree, comes across a river, catches a fish, meets a Brahmin in each village and cuts jokes with him. According to convention, there is a description of cloth and a rat in every verse, and a reference to some proverbial saying from Maithili illustrating the main thought of the particular verse. The belief is that if the entire work is recited, the wind will

<sup>1</sup> It is very encouraging to note that Dr. Amaranatha Jha, Vice-Chancellor of the Allahabad University, in the course of his inspection remarks on the Patna University, has drawn the attention of the University to this irregularity and obvious misappropriation. We hope that the authorities will take notice of it.

blow more rapidly. There is no poetic beauty anywhere in a work like this.

In the early days of this century, fresh impetus came to Maithili from the writings of Canda Jha (1830-1907), son of Bhola Jha of Pindarucha (Darbhanga). He wrote in chaste and simple language the *Mithilabhāsa-Rāmāyana*, which may be called his *magnum opus*. The sweetness of its language and style soon attracted the public, and it became very popular both with the learned and with the illiterate. The nature of the theme and the Sanskritic style of the work led Maithilā Sanskritists to realise the charm, brevity and force of their own mother-tongue. It is written mostly in Sanskrit metres, but has songs in accordance with the laws of music of the Mithila school. Like Valmiki's *Rāmāyana* the lines sound melodious when chanted. Similarly, his *Maheśavānīs*, more than a thousand devotional poems in praise of Siva, are sung and enjoyed in every family of Mithilā and in every temple of Siva. In this respect he may easily be ranked with Vidyāpati and Govindadasa. He has left a good collection of the authentic poems of Vidyāpati and Govindadasa in his own handwriting. He wrote also a *Vātāhvāna* like Bhanunath Jha. His translation of the *Purusapriksa* of Vidyāpati is a specimen of early modern Maithili prose. As a musician, a poet and a Sanskritist, he became so popular that in a short time he became an institution in himself.

Munshi Raghunandanadasa, son of Palatasimhadasa of Kūā-Kamalapur (Darbhanga), is the grand old writer of Maithili in the village of Sakhavara. He was born in 1860. Though old, he is still quite energetic in writing. The *Subhadrāharana*, a *Mahākāvya* in 13 cantos is his *magnum opus*. The theme, style and descriptions are all of the old type, but typically Maithila. It is indeed one of the greatest contributions to Maithili literature in the present century. His *Virabālaka* presents the life sketch of Abhimanya. It is a fine specimen of a *khandukāvya*<sup>1</sup> embodying heroic sentiment (virarasa).

The two elder brothers of the late Sir Ganganatha Jha, Vindhyanatha Jha and Gananatha Jha, were authors of fine

<sup>1</sup> A form of short descriptive poetry with dialogues in different metres.

poems. The lyric describing the daughter's parting scene (*Samadāuni-Samvādavāni*) of Vindhyanatha Jha is most pathetic. Other poems of these two brothers are chiefly devotional.

Lāladāsa, a *Karnakāyastha*<sup>1</sup> of Khadaua, was a prolific writer. From the nature of his writings it would seem that his aim was to popularise the stories of the Puranas amongst semi-literates and women through their mother-tongue with a view to teaching them lessons on Duty. Hence not much poetry is found in them. Some of his more important works are: *Pativratacāra*, *Strīśiksā*, *Candigarita*, *Jānakirāmāyana*, *Rameshwaracarita-Rāmāyana*, *Ganeśakhanda*, and *Sāvitri-satyavānakathā*.

Gunavantalāladāsa of Bhacchi was also a writer of this type. He has more than a dozen works to his credit. His compositions are of a somewhat higher order. Some of his works are: *Nalopakhyāna*, *Sudarśanopakhyāna*, and *Sukanyopakhyāna*.

Another *karnakāyastha* of great ability was Pulakitalālādāsa (Madhura) of Babhanagāmā (Bhagalpore). He wrote a few *khandakāvyas*, *upākhyānas*<sup>2</sup> and essays which are quite interesting. His aim was, unlike the above-mentioned two writers', to produce good literature. We find occasional originality and poetic beauty in his works.

Yadunatha Jha (Yaduvara) of Muraho (Bhagalpore) has left poetical works of merit on various topics. His *Kavitāksumāñjali* is a very interesting collection of poems. Chedi Jha of Vanagao (Bhagalpore) is an old writer. His poems have originality, a natural flow and melody. His themes are both old and modern. His *Koilidūti* is a charming work. He has translated the *Gitagovinda* of Jayadeva and *Vaidehi-Vanavāsa* very successfully. His prose writings are marked with brevity and force.

Gangadhara Mishra of Chainpur (Bhagalpore) was a very sincere writer. His style and language are marked with

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<sup>1</sup> A section of the Kayastha community who originally belonged to the Karnatak Province of the South and migrated to Mithila along with their first Southern King, Nanyadeva, who ruled over Mithila in the 10th century A. D.

<sup>2</sup> Short narrative tales.

simplicity and strength. His *Sukanyopākhyāna*, *Satyavrataopākhyāna*, and *Nāradamoha* are well-known poems of high standard. Kusheshwara Kumara of Bajitpur (Muzaffarpore) was an ethical versifier. Some of his works are meant exclusively for women and children.

Coming to poets of our own day, Acyutānandadatta was a very promising writer. He had creative faculty, and had he lived long would have done much for his mother-tongue. He died young. His translations of the poems of Kalidasa are very fine. He also wrote stories from the *Mahābhārata*. Dhanuklādharidasa, Kālikumāradasa, and Shrimanttalaladasa were other good writers of the period. Bhuvaneshwara Simha (Bhuvana) (1908-1945), son of Madaneshwara Simha of Anandapur (Darbhanga) was a prominent progressive writer. He did not follow the old trend of thought, style and outlook of writers of the past. He felt that no restriction of any kind should be placed on a genuine poet, and that he should be sincere and true to his own feelings without the shackles of old conventions. This was a reaction to the peculiar circumstances in which he was placed in society. It was a change which society also liked. This should not, however, be taken to mean that he was opposed to all that was old. He himself wrote devotional songs like his predecessors. All this we find well illustrated in his *Āsādha* and other poems, including his translations of *Virahini-vrajānganā* and other works. He tried to popularise his views by starting a monthly journal from Vaishali Press (Muzaffarpore), called *Vibhūti* which did great service to Maithili during its existence. He edited the *Anandavijaya Nātikā* of Ramadasa Jha and wrote a critical introduction to it.

The most popular amongst living poets is Sitārāma Jhā of Chaugāmā (Darbhanga). He has several smaller works to his credit. His power of keen observation and his peculiar gift of expressing in verse the true nature of things are wonderful. His style is chaste and simple. Though gifted with the genius of a poet, it is an irony of fate that he has not produced any work of magnitude. Some of his works are: *Sūktisudhā*, *Lokalaksana*, *Padhuācarita* and *Sikasudhā*.

Anūpa Mishra has written several poems and has also translated the *Hitopadeśa*. There is no poetic beauty in his

writings. His translation of the *Meghanādha vadha kāvya* and *Bhartṛharinirvedanāṭaka* by Gaurishankara Jha are quite successful.

Badrinātha Jhā (born in 1892), son of Vidyanātha Jhā of Sarisava (Darbhanga), is a scholar and poet of very high standard. His *Ekāvalīparinaya*, a *Mahākāvya* in 22 cantos, is one of his most important works. It is written in the style of the old poets of Sanskrit. A great literary scholar, he has adorned this work with all poetic beauties. It is really a great contribution to Maithili literature.

Amongst younger poets we may mention Ishanatha Jhā of Navatola (Darbhanga), a versatile writer in prose, poetry and drama. The *Mālā*, a recent collection of his poems, shows great flights of poetic imagination. His thought is modern. He does not confine himself to the style and metres of the older poetry. He is decidedly one of the best poets of the day.

The *Kīcakabudha* of Tantranātha Jhā presents a good specimen of Maithili poetry written in blank-verse. The poetical works of Jīvanātha Jhā of Isahapur (Darbhanga) are of the old type. The poems of Kāshikānta Mishra (Madhupā) of Korthu (Darbhanga) deal with various aspects of Nature as seen in Mithilā. His language is generally simple, but at times the influence of Sanskrit makes it somewhat artificial. Amongst other promising poets, the following may be mentioned: Kulanandadasa, Arasiprasada Simha, Surendra Jha (Sumana), Buddhidhari Simha (Ramakara), Badrinatha Thakura, Upendra Thakura, Ananda Jha, Riddhinatha Jha, and Baidyanatha Mishra (Yatri).

#### DRAMATIC LITERATURE :—

Amongst dramatists Bhanunatha Jha is the earliest. His *Prabhāvatihāraṇa* is a drama in four acts written in mixed Maithili and Sanskrit. Immediately after the great dramatist Harsanatha Jha who died in 1897, the most prominent figure was Jivana Jha of the Yajvalaya family of Haripur. The Maharaja of Benares, Sir Prabhunarayana Simha Bahadur, was his patron. Jivana Jha was the first amongst dramatists to introduce a change both in technique and style. He replaced the old tradition of mixing Sanskrit and Prakrit with Maithili, by pure and simple Maithili. He selected his themes from

the social life of Mithilā. His *Sundarasamiyoga*, *Sāmavatī-Punarjanma* and *Narmadāsattaka* are some of the more important works of *rūpaka*<sup>1</sup> and *uparūpaka*<sup>2</sup> types. The melody of the songs, the natural flow of the dialogues, the chastity of the language and style, and the delineation of characters have enhanced the value of his writings. All these works have *śringāra*<sup>3</sup> as the main *rasa* (sentiment) and *kaisiki*<sup>4</sup> the main *vṛtti*.<sup>5</sup> He was the author of several poems which are sung on different occasions in Mithilā. In most of these poems he has given Jivanatha as his full name.

The next popular dramatist is Munshi Raghunandana-dasa. His *Mithilā-nātaka* is a very popular drama which has been staged very often with great success. There is not much literary element in it. It depicts the evils of the present-day Mithilā through allegorical characters and pointedly contrasts it with her glorious past. His *Dūlāngadavyāyoga* is a small *uparūpaka* embodying heroic sentiment. It is superior to his first drama. Both its style and its manner of giving expression to the sentiment are quite interesting. His translation of the *Uttararāmacarita* of Bhavabhūti is successful.

The *Cīnī-ka-laddū* of Ishanatha Jha is a tragic-comic drama of great interest. The selection of the *Cīnī-ka-laddū* (a sweetmeat made of sugar) as the pivot on which the entire plot hangs is quite natural for a Maithila. The main charm of the play lies, however, in the character of Batuā-dāsa, the Dewan, who is ultimately the victim of his own intrigues through the very *Cīnī-ka-laddū* which he took to Sudhākānta's son to kill the latter. The humorous scene of the *dholakiā* (drummer) is very successful.

The one-act play has become very popular in Mithilā. Tantranatha Jha's *Kāoléja-Praveshā* (Admission to College) and Harimohana Jha's *Topa-sā-Topa* (From hat to a mark

<sup>1</sup> Dramatic composition. There are ten main varieties of it in Sanskrit.

<sup>2</sup> Minor varieties of dramatic composition in Sanskrit.

<sup>3</sup> Love and erotic sentiment.

<sup>4</sup> One of the varieties of dramatic style, where ladies play the most prominent parts.

<sup>5</sup> Style of dramatic composition.

made on the forehead with sandalwood paste) represent probably the best of them. Biographical plays have also been successfully written, among others, on Ayācī Mishra, the well-known Mīmāmsaka, and on Vidyāpati the great poet.

Almost all the important Sanskrit dramas have been translated, some with success.

**PROSE OF ENTERTAINMENT : FICTION ETC. :—**

Fiction was not encouraging to start with. The earlier works were didactic and often took the form of *Ākhyānas* or legends. The *Simantini-Ākhyāyikā* of Mm. Parameshwara Jha is of the type of old *Ākhyāyikās* found in Sanskrit. The descriptions are very elaborate and artificial. The story is imaginary, and the language pure, though at times very Sanskritised. The *Sudarśanopākhyāna* of Harinarayana Jha is a story taken from the *Purāna* and put in modern garb. It is an interesting, dignified prose work of high standard. The sketches of Chandrashekhar Jha of Harinagara and Baidyanatha Mishra of Basaitha are good interesting prose.

Next came a stream of translations from Bengali, Hindi, other modern Indian languages and from English. Of these Shivānanda Chaudhari's *Kapālakundalā*, Kashinatha Jha's *Rājapūtajivanasandhyā* and *Yugalanguriya*, Kamalananda Simha's *Anandamatha*, Vedananda Jha's translations of several Bengali novels, and Dinanatha Jha's *Vekafildaka Padari* may be mentioned.

Novels properly so called are of recent growth in Maithili. The *Rāmeshwara* of Jivacha Mishra, the *Urmilā* of Chedi Jha, the *Mithilādarpana* of Punyananda Jha of Jahanpur (Purnea) are earlier attempts. The last of these deals with the selection of a bridegroom on the occasion of a pilgrimage to Kāshi. These are quite interesting. The *Candragrahana* of Kāncinatha Jha (Kirana) is a small and interesting novelette. Its theme is the rescuing of a lady from the hands of a Mussulman goonda (ruffian) at the Simariāghāta where she had gone to take a bath in the Ganges on the occasion of a lunar eclipse. The book aroused interest in novel-writing.

Next, the *Agilahi* (Agile Girl) of Kumara Gangananda Simha of Banaili is undoubtedly one of our best novels. It is marked by originality of plot and delineation of character. Its language is very chaste. The *Navrātra* of Kalicharana

Jha of Mangarauni (Darbhanga) is one of the most interesting and original pieces of literature. It deals with the non-essential activities of some people during the Durgapuja days. It is a satirical novelette. The keen power of observation of the author is remarkable. The *Mādhavī-Mādhava* of Harinandana Thakura of Bhacchi (Darbhanga) is a very ordinary novel dealing with the marriage of a girl with a person who had fallen in love with her before the marriage. Such love-making and marriages are absolutely foreign to Maithilā society.

By far the most popular novels of the day are *Kanyādāna* and *Dvirāgamana* of Harimohana Jha of Kumara-Bajitpur (Muzaffarpore). He delights his readers by presenting in a humorous way the conflict of old and new ideas. He pleads that he should not be misunderstood, and that he is a disinterested artist who tries to create comic situations and characters. The two novels together form a pair. The first deals with the necessity of educating girls if they have to marry the English-educated youths of today; while the second tells us that too much of the Western ideal of women's education is not after all very desirable. It would appear thus that the aim of the author is to advocate the educating of girls in the right Indian manner. The first part excited criticism, because of its apparent obsession with the Western type of women's education. From the point of view of art, the first part is the more successful.

The *Sushilā* of Gangapati Simha of Pachahi (Darbhanga) portrays the life of a girl who becomes a widow at an early age. Next comes the tragic novel, *Bhalamānusa* by Yogananda Jha of Koilakha (Darbhanga). It deals with *kulinism* (pride of social status) of Mithilā and is satirical in regard to the higher strata of Maithilā society. The *Jayavara* of Sharadananda Jha of Haripur is an unsuccessful attempt to depict the life of the lowest stratum of Maithilā Brahmanas. It was an ineffective reply to the *Bhalamānusa*.

Coming to story-writing, we find that though writing short stories is not anything new for Sanskritists, the present style of writing short stories has definitely been influenced by Western literature. It has come to Maithilī through Bengali and Hindi. At the same time there is sufficient original-

ity in them inasmuch as they deal exclusively with various aspects of life in Mithilā. The *Pranamyadevatā* (ironically, the Worthy Gods !) of Harimohana Jha is a collection of eleven stories. His outlook is satirical. He goes beyond the limits of comic art and approaches that of farce. Its appeal is to illiterates or to the undeveloped minds of young boys. The following names may be mentioned amongst the more prominent story writers: Tantranatha Jha, Harinandana Thakura (Saroja), Jaleshwara Simha, Paramanandadatta, Yadunandana Sharma, Buddhidhari Simha, and Giridhara Jha (Vikala).

In regard to fables, we have only the translations of the *Hitopadeśa* by Anupa Mishra, *Isapnitikathā* by Ramanatha Jha and *Udayanakathā* by Ramanatha Jha, the editor of the *Sāhityapatra*. As for translations of novels, most of the novels of Bankimchandra have been translated successfully.

The following may be mentioned as standard essayists : Mm. Muralidhara Jha, Pulakitalaladasa (Madhura), Ganga-pati Simha, Laksmipati Simha, Bholalaladasa, Baladeva Mishra, Dukhamochana Jha, the Datta brothers, Harinandana Thakura, Ramanatha Jha, Trilochana Jha of Bettiah, and the present writer.

#### PROSE OF INFORMATION : PHILOSOPHY, CRITICISM, ETC. :—

Next we may pass on to contributions in the field of Philosophy and Ethics. The *Vedāntadīpaka* of Mm. Dr. Sir Ganganatha Jha is a popular work on Sankara-Vedānta. The author has expounded the tenets of the system in easy and intelligible Maithili without entering into the intricacies of the subject. The *Sāṅkhya-khadyotikā* of Kshemadhari Simha of Madhubani is based on the Sāṅkhyasūtras. It explains the system in a popular way. The *Prācina-Vaiṣṇava-sampradāya* by me is a popular book dealing with the philosophy of all four main Vaisnava schools, namely, of Rāmānuja, Mādhava, Nimbārka and Vallabha. The *Manovijnāna* of Kshemadhari Simha deals with psychology on Western lines. Amongst translations, the *Bhagavadgītā* by Trilochana Jha, *Īśopanisad* by Chedi Jha of Vanagāma, and *Sāṅkhyatattwakaumudi* of Vasaspati Mishra by Durgadhara Jha are quite good. The *Vyavahārvijnāna* of Bhekhanatha Jha of Gangauli (Darbhanga) is a wonderful work. The author

gives us an account of the practices, customs and religious activities of Mithilā. The *Strīdharmasiksā* of Laladasa, the *Strīdharmaprakasā* of Yageshwara Jha of Balia (Darbhanga), and the *Nārīdharmamālā* of Yageshwara Jha of Hanumananagara (Darbhanga) deal exclusively with the duties of women. The *Grhasthācāradarpana* and *Suddhiprakāsa* by Yageshwara Jha of Hanumananagara, the *Sadacarasopana* of Kusheshwara Kumara are concerned with the duties of a householder and with the means of external purification.

In Rhetoric and Prosody, the original works are : *Candra-bharana* of Ramachandra Mishra of Mathura dealing with all the *alankāras*<sup>1</sup> on the lines of the *Kuvalayānanda* of Appayya Diksita ; the *Viswabhūsana* of Riddhinatha Jha on poetics, the *Alankāradarpana* of Sitarama Jha for beginners, the *Chandolankāramanjūsā* on prosody by Sitarama Jha, and the *Alankrtabodha* by Vedananda Jha for beginners. All these are standard works.

The *Mithilātattvavimarśa* of Mm. Parameshwara Jha is a history of Mithilā with special reference to her literary contributions. The *Prācīna O Arvācīna Vidvāna* of Taracharana Jha of Mangarauni is a brief history of the old and new scholars of Mithilā. The *Mithilābhāsamaya-Itihāsa* of Mm. Makunda Jha of Haripur deals mainly with the history of the Darbhanga Raja from Maheśa Thakura to the present Maharajadhiraja. It contains much information on very important and interesting events. The *Mithilādarśana* of Shashinatha Chaudhari and the *Mithilādarpana* of Rasabihari-laladasa treat of various aspects of the history of Mithilā. Bholalaladasa and Mahendranarayana Jha have written a few text-books on the history of India.

On Maithili grammar, the latest and the most important contribution is by Dinabandhu Jha. His *Bhāsāvidyotana*, written in old sutra form with commentary, is unique in the history of modern Indian languages. It may be said to be the most scientific and exhaustive grammar written in any modern Indian language. It can be easily classed with any of the old Prakrit grammars.

*Yātrā-śakuna* by Sitārama Jha, *Muhūrtacakram* by Dhir-

<sup>1</sup> Figures of speech.

endranarayana Chaudhari of Ballipur ( Darbhanga ), and *Siśubodha* of Shishupala Jha are useful books on elementary Astrology.

Maithili studies have advanced on modern scientific lines chiefly through the contributions of Dr. Sudhakara Jha, Dr. Subhadra Jha, Ramanatha Jha, Shivanandana Thakura and Jayakanta Mishra and the present writer. The writings of Nagendranatha Dasa, are very valuable for a critical study of Maithili. His *Vidyāpatikāvyāloka* deserves careful consideration. Similarly, the *Vidyāpati Thakkura* written by the present writer deals critically with the life and works of Vidyāpati, the great poet of Mithilā. The essays in literary criticism of Shrikrishna Mishra of Gajahara ( Darbhanga ) are penetrating and have opened up a new line of activity.

#### WOMEN WRITERS :—

The women of Mithilā have never lagged behind their men in scholarship from the hoary days of great antiquity. The names of Maitreyi, wife of Yājnavalkya ; Bhāratī, wife of Mandana Mishra ; and Lakhimā Thakkurāini, wife of Shiva Simha, the patron of Vidyāpati, and Chandrakanta, Vidyāpati's son's wife, are quite familiar in the history of Sanskrit literature. But due to their shyness and modesty, which are regarded as part of their natural grace, they have not made a show of their learning. Their attitude can well be described in the words of Bhanudatta Mishra, the author of the *Rasamanjari*—*Vacahpriyatamasruteratithireva* ( meaning, the speech of ladies should not reach frequently even the ear of her husband, just like a good guest whose visits are only occasional ). But times have changed and now there are a few women writers who have come forward with their compositions. Amongst those the following names may be mentioned: Arundhati Devi, the author of *Vidusi-Mahilā*, Harilata, wife of Harinandanaji of Raghopur, Indramaya, Shyamakumari, wife of Jayanarayana Mallika, Shambhavi Devi, Lakshmivati Devi ( Lila ) and Yogamaya, wife of Bholalaladasa.

### III

#### CONCLUDING REMARKS :—

For want of space I have had to include in this paper only those authors who are considered to be prominent and

fairly representative, and their works. It is quite possible that through oversight some really good authors or works may have escaped my notice.

I am confident that when the Maithila intelligentsia, renowned for its scholarship, takes the lead, in a short period Maithili literature will easily challenge other modern Indian literatures. Indeed our literature would have done this long ago but for the ungenerous, narrow, and stepmotherly treatment meted out to it, as already said, by the home University of Patna.

Another reason, even more regrettable, for the set-back is that in the last Bihar Education Reorganisation Committee the proposal of Dr. Amaranatha Jha, the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Allahabad, to impart instruction to the Maithila child in his own mother-tongue, was thrown out by respected leaders like Dr. Rajendra Prasad and Dr. Sachchidananda Sinha, in the unavoidable absence of Dr. Jha from the Committee even after it had been unanimously agreed to in the earlier sittings of the Committee. Under the same prejudice the District and the Local Boards of North Bihar have not given any place to it in their schools and offices so far, though the number of the Maithili-speaking public exceeds one and a half crores. The same is true of Government offices and Courts. We hope that good sense and generosity will prevail when the new popular Ministry comes to power in the Province and that the natural rights of Maithili will be duly recognised.

## 8. MALAYALAM

By C. KUNHAN RAJA

Dr. C. Kunhan Raja, M.A., D.PHIL. (OXON.), is an enthusiast for the traditional values of Indian culture. He had edited many Sanskrit works, and was presented in 1946 with a Volume of Studies in appreciation of his services to Oriental scholarship. His services to Malayalam literature have been recognised by the Madras Kerala Samaj's establishment in 1945 of an annual gold medal award in his name for recitation in the Malayalam classics and a Dr. C. Kunhan Raja Malayalam Prize.

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Malayalam language and literature have undergone a revolutionary change in the last century along with all the other literatures of India, owing to their contact with European literatures and thought. Indian literatures developed in the respective languages in the end of the first and in the beginning of the second milleniums of the Christian Era. It is only in Tamil that there is a rich literature which goes back to a much earlier age. All the literatures, even from the very beginning, evolved as Sanskritic literatures, with their literary forms and thoughts completely influenced by Sanskrit. There is nothing in India, not even in the earliest Dravidian literature, that can truly be called pre-Sanskritic.

Malayalam had come into contact with Tamil and Kannada literatures. But there has not been any real influence of these languages on Malayalam literature. One notices a little of Tamilism in the Malayalam language. But the content of Malayalam poetry has been purely Malayalam with a good admixture of Sanskrit. During some later centuries there was Persian influence; but this influence was confined to a few political and military terms introduced into the language. Thus Sanskrit is the only language and lit-

erature that had a real influence on the development of Malayalam literature. The next great influence is from the English language, which has completely metamorphosed Malayalam language and literature. It would be convenient to deal with this new phase of literature under various headings like poetry, the drama, novels, short stories, biographies, literary criticism, essays, journalism and general subjects.

POETRY :—

Malayalam poetry started with its own indigenous metres, but with matter borrowed from Sanskrit, along with themes selected from the locality and pertaining to the people of the country. When local themes were selected, with local heroes and heroines, local events and local scenery, there was woven into them material taken from Sanskrit sources. Some of the grandest specimens of Malayalam poetry belong to the group where the theme is purely Sanskrit, namely, the Malayalam renderings of *Bhagavata* (*Krishnagatha*), *Ramayana* and *Bharata*. The metres in all these three are purely Malayalam. Then came a period of poetry in which the Sanskrit and Malayalam metres appeared interspersed. These are the *Champus*, where the theme was mainly taken from Sanskrit epics. But there were some *Champus* with local themes, sometimes of a historical nature. This period was followed by a new form, namely, the *Thullas*, in which the theme of poetry was mainly Sanskrit, but the metres were purely Malayalam. The last period which immediately preceded the modern one was essentially Sanskrit in form but local in spirit. Right through this changing course, the spirit of Malayalam poetry remained purely Malayalam. There is only one poet, and he is the greatest, in whom we see nothing of Malabar except in the matter of language and metre. He is Ezhuttassan who rendered *Ramayana* and *Bharata* into Malayalam.

From the beginning of the second quarter of the last century, the metres used in serious Malayalam poetry were Sanskritic. The poets were very particular about the correctness of language, workmanship, rhythm, melody, diction, metres etc. The theme did not matter. Form was everything in poetry. The language current during this period was the pure Sanskritic Malayalam, where poets used only such

Sanskrit words as could be understood by educated persons, words that had become part of the Malayalam vocabulary. Some people, however, indulged in the use of Sanskrit which even Sanskrit scholars found difficult to grasp. But that was an exception and was not looked upon with favour. The school of poets that flourished for about a century from the end of the first quarter of the last century may legitimately be called the classical school.

A great change came over Malayalam poetry from the end of the second decade of the present century. Although most of the poets of the last century, who were graduates of Universities, were acquainted with romantic poetry of the nineteenth century in English, Sanskrit poetry was their model. But the *Gitanjali* of Rabindranath Tagore came to the notice of the people of Malabar when the great poet was awarded the Nobel Prize, and his famous poem was made available in English. Soon his other poems also became accessible to the people in a language known to them. This was the turning-point in the history of contemporary Malayalam poetry.

It is difficult to fix any one year as forming the demarcation line between the previous and the present age in Malayalam poetry. But the death of Kerala Varma Valia Koil Thampuran in 1914 may be taken as such. He was universally accepted as king in the literary domain of Malabar, though in point of actual contribution to the literature his share is not very voluminous. Kunhukuttan Thampuran of the Cranganore Royal Family had died a few years before this. The best and the most prominent contribution of the preceding age had already appeared by that time. The metrical translation into Malayalam of the *Mahabharata* by Kunhukuttan Thampuran and of the *Ramayana* by Vallathol Narayana Menon were complete. The great epics on the model of the grand epics of Sanskrit, namely, *Rugmangadacharita* by Panthalam Kerala Varma, *Pandavodaya* by Kochunni Thampuran of the Cranganore Royal Family, *Citravayogam* by Vallathol, *Umakerala* by Ullur S. Paramesvara Aiyar, *Kesaviya* by K. C. Kesava Pillai, had all made their appearance. Venmani Senior and Junior, Naduvam Senior, Oravankara, Sivolli and others, who were shining stars in

Malayalam literature, were dead long before this. Those who survived Kerala Varma Valia Koli Thampuran have not made any great contribution after that. Thus the death of Kerala Varma marks the advent of the present age.

Vallathol, who is a good Sanskrit scholar and who was a poet of eminence in the school of the last century, was at that time quite a young man. When he started writing poetry in this century, he definitely belonged in art to the school of the last century. The intense political agitation started by Mahatma Gandhi and the awakening among the masses to the world movement were factors that contributed much to the revolution that the poetry of Malabar underwent. It may definitely be asserted that Vallathol started the new movement.

When he began to write shorter poems, he introduced Malayalam metres. The yearning for political freedom, the inequalities in the social organisation, the sufferings of the masses on account of the unfair distribution of wealth among the people, the miseries of the ordinary labourer and of the depressed classes, the decay of a sense of pride in national institutions and national ways of life owing to foreign domination and fascination for foreign civilisation and culture—in all these respects Vallathol took up the banner of nationalism in Malabar as an integral part of the nationalistic movement in India. While ordinary politicians appealed to the people from platforms and while journalists were writing articles explaining to the common man the nationalistic spirit of the age, that dominated the country, Vallathol began to make his appeal to the people through his soul-stirring poetry, simple so that even ordinary men could understand it, short so that even in the bustle of a hurried life one could read it, sweet and melodious so that it gave joy and rest in an atmosphere of excitement and unrest.

The political awakening in the country was only an occasion for Vallathol to take up the lead in the new literary movement in Malabar. He had written short poems and had introduced Malayalam metres into them even before he took a prominent part in Malabar politics. It cannot be said that there is any great political bias in his best poems. The change in him from the classical to the modern style was a

natural development in him as an artist. He expressed himself in this new style with the political movement in Malabar as his background.

Until the contemporary age in Malayalam literature, poetry had been the luxury of the leisured classes ; it grew round the royal courts and the mansions of rich aristocrats. Being heavy, serious and intellectual, it appealed only to the educated. But now poetry shifted to the camps of nationalistic agitators ; it began to appeal to the common man with little education and intellectual equipment ; even people who were worried with many problems of life and had little leisure began to find it possible to enjoy the beauties of this new form of poetry. Simple words, easy construction, avoidance of play upon words, an occasional archaism in language reintroducing old words and old modes of expression that had long ceased to be current in both colloquial and literary styles, emphasis on the theme of poetry as a very important factor, treating the life and hopes of the common man as material for high-class poetry—these are some of the great changes that Malayalam poetry underwent under the leadership of Vallathol in the new movement.

It is doubtful if there is another people in the world, either ancient or modern, who love their province so much as the Malayalis do. Perhaps the Greeks of the ancient world and the Irish of the modern age are the nearest approach to them in this respect. The fauna and flora of the province, the hills and the dales, the rivers and the canals, the fertile green fields, the continuous garden houses, the temples and festivals, the sports and recreations, the habits and culture of the people, a natural exclusiveness, an unconscious and easy sense of unaffected superiority, and a consequent aloofness—all played a prominent part through the ages in the literary art of the country. The general distribution of literary education among the people brought about a sort of unity amongst them in spite of the rigid caste system. This intense love of the homeland among the people of Malabar, along with the traditional cultural unity among them, and the relatively higher level of general education among the masses in comparison with other parts, made the spread of the new movement in poetry a very easy task. The move-

ment was not associated with any class conflict. The change was a revolution only in respect of the might of the current and the suddenness of the transformation. It was, however, an orderly change over from one phase to another in which all classes participated.

Vallathol is the leader of the modern movement, and the modern age will go down to history as the age of Vallathol. Although the political atmosphere around him affected him and he himself wrote many poems which had a distinct political bias, it cannot be said that his best poems are political ones. Even in such poems it is the art element that will be appreciated by posterity and not the political element. His *Magdalana Mariam* will ever remain a masterpiece in the literature. The theme is taken from a source which is little represented in Malayalam. It is a fairly long poem, written in a Malayalam metre, and is exquisite in workmanship. It is not a grand epic. His *Sishyanum Makanaum* (Disciple and Son), *Acchanum Makalaum* (Father and Daughter), *Kochu Sita* (Little Sita), *Oru Chitram* (A Picture) are some of his shorter poems which have no political tinge; and they are some of his best. Vallathol has also rendered into Malayalam many of the dramas of Bhasa from Sanskrit, and he is now rendering into Malayalam some dramas of a thirteenth-century author named Vatsaraja. A few of them have already appeared. Thus Vallathol has remained true to his art, and to him art is always superior to immediate appeal to the many.

Some poets of the last age still continue. Ullur S. Parameshwara Aiyar has written a large number of short poems also during the period under review, besides his grand epic already mentioned. His *Pingala*, *Chitrasala*, *Karnabhushana*, *Manimanjusha* and *Kalpasakhi* are some of his best poems. He is ever classical. The political movement and nationalistic agitation have not moved him. Kuttipurath Kesavan Nair is another classical poet of the last age who continues in the old style. To him a poet is only an artist, and poetry is only art. Reform of society is not among the direct missions of a poet.

K. M. Panikkar is one of the most luminous figures in the literary firmament of Malabar. He is one of the greatest

admirers of Vallathol, though it cannot be said that he is a follower of his school. He is essentially classical, yet modern. He pays great attention to form, to the element of sweet music in poetry, to metres and to polish in style, language and diction. To him poetry is to be recited aloud and to be enjoyed through the ear. He prefers Sanskrit metres for good Malayalam poetry, and seldom uses Malayalam metres in his poems. He has struck a new note in the *Champu* form; while classical Malayalam *Champus* mixed Malayalam and Sanskrit metres, Panikkar uses elegant prose along with metrical passages on the model of Sanskrit *Champus*. His *Hyder Nayakan* shows his command of Malayalam prose, which he can bend to suit any situation, from the crisp and simple to the highly elaborate and ornate. This is an original *Champu* in Malayalam.

In creating and depicting original situations, Panikkar has no equal. His *Pankiparinayam* (Panki's Wedding) is without a parallel in Malayalam. It deals with the marriage of a girl named Panki, the daughter of a highly placed personage, according to the custom, once in vogue in India, of the bride choosing her husband from among the suitors assembled. Here the poet finds an opportunity to describe a large number of persons well known in Malabar society.

Nalapat Narayana Menon is another poet who has remained purely classical in his art, in spite of the political and nationalistic movement in the country. His *Sulocana* was published in the beginning of the second decade of this century. His translation of Edwin Arnold's *Light of Asia* is a great contribution to Malayalam literature. His *Kannunirtulli* (Tear-Drops) is an elegy on the death of his wife. Although there is a personal touch in it, it is strictly classical in style and in execution.

Kumaran Asan is an avowed social reformer. In spite of the note of social reform in his work, and in spite of the pronounced purpose in his art, he is still one of the greatest poets of recent times. His *Karuna*, *Chandala*, *Bhishkuki*, *Duravastha*, and *Nalini* are some of his best known works. G. Sankara Kurup is one of the most popular poets of the new school. There is a clear touch of nationalism in his poems; he has also written some poems, and not without

success, with an element of mysticism. Changanpuzha Krishna Pullai is another popular poet of the modern school. He has a real grasp of style and handles Malayalam metres with rare dexterity. Balamani Amma, a niece of Nalapat Narayana Menon, is also a good poet with a large number of works to her credit.

It is true that judged from old standards the new poetry does not come up to the mark. There is nothing that can compare with the *Krishnagatha*, with the *Ramayana* and the *Bharata*, with the classical *Champus* and with the *Thulla* songs of Kunchan Nambiyar. But modern poetry must be judged from its own standards. No new movement can conform to old standards. The real position of the poetry of the new school can be, and will be, truly ascertained only after some time. I am personally of the view that instead of critics of the coming generation placing present-day poetry on a low level they will accord to it a position along with the best in the former periods of the literature.

Vallathol, the leader of the new literary movement, had in his earlier days attempted something on the style of the grand epics of ancient Sanskrit literature. But he will not be judged in future as a great poet on his epics. As a matter of fact, no great poet in any language has in recent times attempted works of the style of Homer or Milton. Rabindranath Tagore has not attempted it in India. There is no work on the model of the *Divine Comedy* from the pen of Sarojini Devi. Why should the absence of grand epics be considered a sign of decadence in literary art in Malayalam?

Although there are a few poets who try to retain the old standards and the form that prevailed in the last century, the real spirit of poetry in the present century is that which has been introduced by Vallathol. Poetry has a purpose; poets have a mission; art should reform life directly, the common man and his life are within the concern of poets; art and artists should not remain detached from the main current of nationalistic movements in the country. These are some of the notions that prevail in the province, as they do elsewhere also.

Sanskrit poetry had such a hold on Malayalam for a very long period that the language has become more or less San-

skritic in the form of its literary expression. The technique of Sanskrit metres is absolutely different from that of Malayalam metres. It was difficult for the poets of the new school to remould the language into the form of Malayalam metres; and one must confess that the earlier attempts were not particularly successful. In consequence, the poetry of the present age in Malayalam metres suffers much in the matter of melody and rhythm. The regular beat, the continuous stops, the manipulation of short and long syllables, and the change in *cæsura* (or natural pause in the middle of a line) to produce variety, in all these matters poets are only now getting into the real technique of Malayalam metres. Even Vallathol, the leader of the new movement, commands a far more musical style in Sanskrit metres than in Malayalam ones. But some younger poets are getting into the proper form in regard to Malayalam metres. The new movement is still in its stage of infancy, only a quarter of a century old. I am sure that when it has completed a century, its total output will, both in quality and quantity, be equal to that of the last. Far from being called the barren age, the present age is sure to go down in history as one of the most glorious in Malayalam literature.

#### DRAMA :—

No Indian literature except Sanskrit had a really high-class dramatic literature. The Kathakali, which started about two hundred years ago, is only an apology for a drama. As literature, there are only a few specimens that can stand a critical test, and these few can stand any test. Dramas started in Malayalam in the last century much as translations of Sanskrit ones and also as close imitations of them. Till now Malayalam dramas were Malayalam only in language. In form and spirit they were Sanskrit. The *Sakuntala* of Kalidasa was translated into Malayalam by Kerala Varma Vaila Koil Thampuran. Following this there were translations of other dramas as well as other translations of this same drama. Original dramas like *Bhagavadduta* by Naduvam Senior and *Subhadrarjuna* by Thottekkat Ikkavu Amma (a very talented woman poet) were also written in Malayalam in the last century on the model of Sanskrit dramas. K. M. Panikkar was the originator of a new form of drama. He

retained the classical form ( verses interspersed with prose, division into Acts, prologues for certain Acts, etc.), but discarded many elements, like the opening prologue, for which there is no need today. As is always the case with great poets, he took the themes from epics or history, and presented it in a modern garb. He always harmonised classicism with modernity. His *Mandodari*, *Bhishma* and *Dhruvasvamini* stand out prominently in modern dramatic literature in Malayalam.

The drama of the modern age is really the prose drama, with a social bias. Krishnan Thampi's *Urvashi*, as opera ( an original one in Malayalam ) is only a stray production of the age. In modern dramas there is a tendency towards social reform. Short prose dramas of the style of Bernard Shaw and Oscar Wilde are the models of the day. The writers of the present day take their theme usually from contemporary life. There is an attempt at humour, not always very successful. There is an appearance of caricaturism in these dramas, not always of a very elevated nature. Few who write these dramas are real artists. Most of them are written for schoolboys, University students and other amateurs for presentation at periodical celebrations of various Associations, and the dramas are seldom meant to appear, and are seldom worthy to appear, as literature in book form, though many of them have so appeared. But their presentation on the stage has always been a great success, more because of the natural histrionic talent of the Malayalis.

It was C. V. Raman Pillai ( to be mentioned prominently in the section on novels ) who began to write such dramas. He was followed by E. V. Krishna Pillai. Rama Varma Appan Thampuran has also written many small short prose dramas. Chellappan Nair and Kesava Pillai are two other writers in this field. Many English dramas, works of Continental dramatists like Ibsen and Maeterlinck, and dramas of Tagore and some other Bengali authors are also available in Malayalam translation. There are also a few dramas whose themes are taken from Hindu mythology. History too has provided themes for Malayalam dramas, like *Velu Thampi Dalava* by Kainikkara Padmanabha Pillai.

T. C. Achyuta Menon wrote partial operas, where there

were prose passages interspersed with verses in Sanskrit metres (to be sung of course on the stage), and songs. His *Sangitanaisadha* and *Harischandracharita* (especially the former) were once very popular. Some classical dramas like *Sakuntala* also appeared in this form, and were presented on the stage. P. V. Krishna Warrier played a prominent part in such semi-operatic adaptation of Sanskrit dramas. Krishnan Thampi wrote some Harikathas, narrations of epic stories with songs and narrations. This does not come within the field of dramas, but since it does not fall under any other category it is mentioned here.

Drama as a literary form was absent in the early stages; it was only a partial success when it appeared as Kathakali; it was quite successful as translation from or imitation of Sanskrit dramas, it does not deserve to be called a great success in modern times. Except the dramas of K. M. Panikkar, I fear that nothing written in recent times may survive.

#### NOVELS:—

This is a literary form which was introduced into Malayalam with English literature. The first attempts were imitations of English novels, and even now they remain essentially only such. There have been many direct translations from English, apart from imitations and adaptations. Many of the prominent English and Continental novels have been translated into Malayalam. The novels in Bengali by Bankim Chandra Chatterji, Sarat Chandra Chatterjee, R. C. Dutt and others have also been translated. Except when the originals are in English, in all the others the Malayalam rendering is based upon the English version by those who do not know the original; as such there is deficiency in the Malayalam rendering.

There are a few historical novels also which can stand comparison with the best in any literature. T. M. Appu Nedungadi's *Kundalata* and O. Chandu Menon's *Indulekha* and *Sarada* were the earliest of these. C. V. Raman Pillai wrote a historical novel with Marthanda Varma, who founded the modern Travancore State, as the hero. His *Ramaraja Bahadur* and *Dharmaraja* also have as themes events in the history of Travancore. *Bhutarayar* of Rama Varma Appan Thampuran of the Cochin Royal Family is another novel

with its plot taken from early Malabar history. K. M. Panikkar has written historical novels, selecting his plots from Malabar history and also Indian history. *Paranki Patayali*, *Kalyanamal*, *Punarkottu Svaroopam* and *Keralasimham* are his chief works. *Keraleswaran* by T. K. Raman Nambissan, *Keralaputran* by Ambadi Narayana Poduval and *Cheraman Perumal* by Kappana Krishna Nair are other important historical novels in Malayalam.

**SHORT STORY :—**

In the field of the short story, Malayalis have shown a far greater grasp of the art and originality than in that of the novel. There are many writers who are able to write very interesting short stories, with attractive situations portrayed in a clever way, dealing with subjects of topical interest, and endowed with real literary taste of permanent value. But there are many which are only different from the prose dramas in form, and are as unsuccessful as the dramas. The material for the successful short stories is collected from a far wider field than for the prose dramas. These short stories form really the prose counterparts of modern poetry, where the practical interest of the time is introduced with artistic dexterity. One does not note in them the rather cheap caricaturism of the prose dramas. There is an air of seriousness, though humour is not wanting. The modern short stories of Malayalam can be compared with good short stories in other languages, and will go down to posterity as one of the rich heritages from the present age.

Oduvil Kunhikrishna Menon, A. Narayana Poduval and Sukumaran were some of the earliest story writers of the century. Their stories were patterns for others, which, however, had no variety. Only the names changed; neither the general trend nor the types of characters were altered. E. V. Krishna Pillai wrote a large number of stories, mostly imitations of our adaptations from English. Takazhi Sankara Pillai is a really successful writer of short stories. *Putumalar*, *Nityakanyaka* and *Atiyozhukkukal* are some of his best. Kesavadev and Pottekkat are propagandists, and though they have good grasp of fine situations and development of plot, they lack insight into human nature, which Takazhi Sankara Pillai shows. Vaikkom Ahamad Bhasheer is a

Muslim writer of good promise, so also is Ponkunnu Varkey, a Christian. Lalitambika Antarjanam, a lady from the Namboodiri community, accustomed according to tradition to be shut up in the harem, is a very prominent writer of stories. Saraswathi Amma is another good writer among ladies. Tagore's short stories have been translated into Malayalam.

BIOGRAPHIES :—

Another line of literary activity that has arisen in the language in recent times is biography. There are no ancient biographies. If there is any historical literature, there is a good admixture of mythology also in it. P. K. Narayana Pillai's treatises on Kunchan Nambiyar and Ezhuttassan fall under history of literature, though they are biographies. *Mahaccaritasangraha* and *Indiayile Mahanmar* (translation of G. P. Pillai's *Representative Indians*) are some of the short biographies that were available early in the century. They too are not what may be truly called biographies. Short accounts of some of the earlier literary luminaries in magazines are biographical. Then the life of Vidvan Koil Thampuran and of the artist Koil Thampuran (Ravi Varma) were written in the form of small books. Lives of Vivekananda, Ramakrishna Paramahamsa, Dayananda Saraswati and of most of the political leaders appeared in due course. Short accounts of the lives of poets like Unnayi Warrier, Kunhukuttan Thampuran, Oduvil Kunhikrishna Menon and of other writers like O. Chandu Menon were also undertaken. In a few sketches with the general title of *Sahityapranayikal*, the lives of some others also were narrated. Hari Sarma has written a full biography of K. C. Kesava Pillai and of Ullur S. Paramesvara Aiyar. *Kerala Panini* (a life of Raja Raja Varma) and *Keralavarmadevan* are other notable biographies. *Sahityapanchanana* (P. K. Narayana Pillai) by P. K. Parameswaran Nair, is the latest addition and is a full and voluminous biography of a scholar who has contributed not a little to the understanding of Malayalam language and literature in recent times. Translations from English like the autobiographies of Jawaharlal Nehru and Mahatma Gandhi are also available in Malayalam.

## LITERARY CRITICISM :—

Malayalam literature, like all Indian literatures, has taken Sanskrit as the standard for literary judgement. Till very recently, literary criticism consisted only in applying the rules of Sanskrit poetics to Malayalam poetry. Raja Raja Varma's *Bhashabhooshana* is only a Malayalam rendering of works on poetics in Sanskrit. In his *Sahityasahyam*, he attempts something more, dealing with the general principles of rhetoric. In recent times, methods of literary criticism as studied in English literature, have been applied, and terms and expressions like art for art's sake, romanticism and realism, purpose in poetry, mysticism, and so on are known to all critics. There is an unfortunate tendency, which I understand is current in other Indian languages also, to condemn classical poetry in the language as an obstacle to social progress. It is denounced as having extolled kings and court life, aristocracy and social inequality, wars and imperialism. But this is the cry only of a few irresponsible critics. The generality of scholars appreciate the past contribution of the language. But literary criticism has not yet developed into a live phase in the literature. There are valuable introductions to various editions of classics. Various magazine articles appear bearing on the subject. Detailed reviews of books also form an important contribution in the field of literary criticism.

In the scheme of education, Malayalam language and literature, as in the case of all the other literatures in India, occupy only a very insignificant position. Thus there is little need for real interpretation of literary values as found in the various forms of literature. Even the literary circle is not very wide. There is literary appreciation and evaluation only as an individual affair. There are no schools of literary criticism. Until literature plays a more prominent rôle in the education of the country, and until the literature of the language occupies a more important position in the social life of the province, there will be no possibility of any schools of literary criticism arising.

History of the literature is a phase of literary criticism which has taken a very definite shape in Malayalam in recent times. The first history of Malayalam literature was written

by Govinda Pillai. Introductions to various literary publications, especially by P. K. Narayana Pillai, Ullur S. Paramesvara Aiyar and Attoor Krishna Pisharoti contain much material of a historical nature. P. K. Narayana Pillai's studies in *Cherussery*, *Kunchan Nambiyar* and *Ezhuttassan* really come under literary criticism and history of literature. Rama Varma Appan Thampuran and Ammaman Thampuran (both of the Cochin Royal Family), A. Balakrishna Pillai, Kuttikrishna Marar, Joseph Mundassery, P. Sankaran Nambiyar, Dr. K. Goda Varma and Dr. C. Kunhan Raja are other names associated with literary criticism, both in respect of appreciation and history.

The *History of Malayalam Literature* in four volumes recently completed by R. Narayana Panikkar is a monumental work, which deserves special mention. Here there is an exhaustive treatment of Malayalam literature from the very beginning to the latest contribution. There is no other work in Malayalam about the Malayalam language and, I am afraid, even in other Indian languages there is no such exhaustive treatment of literature available.

In this connection, mention must be made of the part which journalism has played in the field of literary criticism. Apart from literary journals like *Vidyavinodini*, *Rasikaranjani*, *Bhashaposhini* and *Malayalam Manorama*, even newspapers like *Mathrubhumi* and *Malayalarajyam* have opened their columns to literary articles, and much material has appeared in such literary sections of newspapers.

#### ESSAYS AND JOURNALISM :—

When real prose literature started in the last century, it was on the model of the best prose of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in English. Most of the prose writers knew the best in English. Their sense of style, however, was derived from Sanskrit standards. The first journals were essentially literary, and in their contributions much attention was paid to the element of style. But when journals of a political nature became popular, there was a decline in the standard of prose style. The writers of the last century were all good students of Sanskrit, and they had their classical sense of form and beauty. But the present generation knows only Sanskrit words and not Sanskrit.

They think in English and write in Malayalam after a process of translation. They try to bring in beauty and dignity by a good admixture of Sanskrit words. The Dailies and Weeklies have to write editorials and long comments on daily occurrences, and they get their first-hand information from English sources. Their views on all matters are formed in the English mould. To express them is their main concern : style is not their business. The decline of the classical study and a natural indifference to the value of form and beauty in art have contributed much to this decay in the art of prose writing. This is also a feature seen in all other languages, not only in India, but also in Europe.

Although there has been a wide spread of literacy even from ancient times among the people of this province, and although literary education has been common among nearly all classes of people, still there has been all along what may be called a literary class. There has been a great increase in literacy in the country, and one may say that in Malabar, especially in the Travancore and Cochin States, there is practically cent per cent literacy among men and a good percentage of literacy among women. But many of them today do not know even the great epics of *Ramayana* and *Bharata*. In the earlier times, the authors and the reading public knew the classics well. At present, there is no such contact between most of the writers and the literary tradition of the country. The result is that the people are writing in a language whose rich meaning acquired through many centuries is not known to most of the writers or to the reading public. This is another cause that has led to decadence in literary form in the language.

But there has been a gain in so far as literary activity has become national. There is no separate literary class, as there was in former times. Now we find writers springing up from all classes, from Christians, Ezhavas and Muslims, just as much as from among Brahmins, princes, Ambalavasis and Nayars. On the whole, one may say that Malayalam has kept up its standards in literature like all other literary languages of the world. If there is any fall in any phase of literary form, such decadence is seen also in other languages. Malayalam literature has been influenced by world forces,

marches along with the other literatures of the world, progresses along the lines along which the other literatures are progressing, has discarded many features which have dropped from other literatures also, and has adopted many forms that are seen in other literatures. Considering the fact that this is the first stage in a new development after contact with European literature and thought, the achievements are quite encouraging, and while the present is very bright the future is full of hope.

#### GENERAL LITERATURE :—

Till recently, Indian languages had developed only poetry and other forms of literary art. The intellectual activities of the nation did not find expression through them but always only through Sanskrit. Thus no Indian language had till recent times developed what may be considered scientific or general literature. But now, along with the development of prose literature, there has evolved an immense scientific literature, as well as literature of general interest. All the latest books in English on general subjects are made accessible to the Malayalam reading public. Books on history, geography, philosophy, sociology, economics, politics and various physical sciences are being published in the language, and there is a wide reading public for them. Thus Malayalam has become a full-fledged language with its phase of literary art as well as its phase of literature on science and subjects of general interest. Along with the widening of the reading public brought about by ever-increasing education, there has been widening of the literature, and this widening has brought also depth to the literature.

## 9. MARATHI

By M. D. ALTEKAR

Prof. M. D. Altekar, M.A., of Wilson College, Bombay, the Honorary Secretary-Treasurer of the P.E.N. All-India Centre, is a well-known Marathi critic, novelist and poet, with a great admiration for the medieval poet-saints of Maharashtra. *Shree Dnyandev* is his latest major critical study. His latest Marathi novels are *Mirankush* and *Antrang*.

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Marathi probably became a written language in the eighth or in the ninth century. Well-written literature appeared in it in the twelfth century, and it is likely that there was a certain amount of reasoned writing a couple of centuries earlier. In the thirteenth century, the great Dnyandev wrote his famous commentary on the *Bhagavat Gita*, popularly known as *Dnyaneshwari*. This is the greatest book in Marathi so far, and it is undoubtedly one of the greatest books of the world. Up to the end of the eighteenth century Marathi progressed in various directions. Dnyandev, Nanidev, Eknath, Mukteshwar, Tukaram, Vaman, Moropant, Shreedhar, Ramjoshi are some of the most prominent names of Marathi authors in these six centuries. What is of interest in regard to this early Marathi literature is that it is written by persons of all communities, including the depressed classes. Amongst the writers were some women too. Most of this writing was in the form of poetry, though some of it is really prose and not poetry. Marathi is a language that is derived from Sanskrit and one of its Prakrits. The old Marathi literature took its inspiration from the *Mahabharat* and the *Ramayana*, and from works in Sanskrit on Vedanta philosophy. Of course, there was also considerable inde-

pendent writing in Marathi in these early centuries. The thought material, however, came from the Upanishads, the *Bhagavat Gita* and the Puranas.

Early in the nineteenth century the Peshawa lost the Marathi Empire, and the British became the masters of Maharashtra. Then the Marathi language came into close contact with English. This contact marks the beginning of what is called modern Marathi. From 1820 to 1870, several English school books as well as many classical Sanskrit works were translated into Marathi. Some independent books also were published. The year 1874 witnessed a unique event, the publication of a new monthly journal called *Nibandhmalā*. Its editor and sole writer was Vishnu Shastri Chiplunkar, who wrote a number of powerful essays denouncing the mentality which looked upon everything Western as good and everything Indian as wrong. Apart from that he appreciated all that was good in English, in English literature in particular. In fact he set in motion a new literary movement.

The *Nibandhmalā* continued till 1880, and Chiplunkar died in 1882. Meantime a great event had happened which gave a new turn to public life in Maharashtra. Chiplunkar had been joined by Tilak and Agarkar. They started the New English School with a view to imparting education on national lines. Agarkar edited the *Kesari*, a Marathi weekly, and Tilak edited the *Maharatta*, an English weekly. These three young men with the help of a few others gave a new turn to life. Their life was one of self-sacrifice and service. Later, after Chiplunkar's death, Tilak and Agarkar had differences on matters of social reform, and so in 1887 Agarkar started a paper called the *Sudharak* (The Reformer), and Tilak took over the *Kesari*. Tilak became the leader of the orthodox masses while Agarkar stood firmly by rationalism, preaching that India was conquered by foreigners because of certain defects in the social life of the country, and that these defects must be removed before India could take her proper place among the nations of the world. He did not wish that she should wait long to be independent, but he believed that she would not be able to be independent till then. And thus Marathi writers were divided from 1887

between the schools of Agarkar and of Tilak. The Tilak school was practically the same as the Chiplunkar school. This background requires to be known before we can adequately study Marathi literature.

The views propounded by Tilak and Agarkar came to be presented in the form of the novel, the drama, poetry etc. By the end of the nineteenth century, Marathi literature had grown considerably and was being written in almost all the literary forms. Hari Narayan Apte started writing his novels in the last two decades of the nineteenth century and he died in 1919. He still remains the greatest novelist in Marathi. Deval was the famous drama writer of the time, but, though he died only in the second decade of the present century, he did not write anything after 1905. V. K. Rajwade did research in Marathi history. He collected a huge amount of material, and published it in several volumes, to most of which he wrote critical prefaces which stand as models of critical writing. S. M. Paranje was a journalist. He wrote attractive essays in his journal *Kal*, and for some time even surpassed Tilak in popularity.

So, by the beginning of the present century, Marathi had adopted most of the literary forms that had come to be known through English and other Western literatures. Journalism became very popular and several writers to journals became famous as literary men. Hari Narayan Apte was the great novelist at the beginning of the century, and he had many an imitator. Among dramatists, Deval was the most eminent, and his *Sharada*, a social drama which condemned the marriage of old men with young girls made a great sensation at the time. As a poet, Keshavsuta reigned supreme, and was looked upon as the father of modern Marathi poetry. He died in 1905. He was undoubtedly a very great poet. Rajwade has been referred to above as the scholar of historical research, while S. M. Paranje was the unique essay writer. Tilak as the editor of the *Kesari* wrote a number of thoughtful articles most of which have become literature. Tilak by this time had become a very great figure in the public life of the country. His political eminence eclipsed his importance as a Marathi writer. Paranje was a follower of the Tilak school, and two assistants in Tilak's

*Kesari* office became very important as writers in Marathi. One of them is Mr. N. C. Kelkar, the doyen of living Marathi authors. He wrote dramas, essays, biographies and even novels. He also wrote a work on politics. The other is Mr. K. P. Khadilkar who became famous as a writer of dramas. Historical research was continued by several competent men like Bhave and Sardesai, while the systematic study of old Marathi was undertaken by men like Pangarkar (who died a few years ago). The novel was taken up by many writers. It developed new forms. Some well known names in this connection are those of Phadke, Dr. Ketkar, Khandekar, Madkholkar, P. Y. Deshpande, Sane Guruji, etc. But the one most respected after Apte is Prof. V. M. Joshi who died two years ago. In drama, besides Kelkar and Khadilkar, there were several eminent writers. The Kirlokar Dramatic Company was a very important dramatic institution which performed Deval's dramas. After Deval, their dramatist was S. K. Kelnatkar. Kochatkar was also an excellent humorist. While Kolhatkar was still alive, Khadilkar entered the field as a writer of operas. He had already made a name as a writer of prose dramas, one of which was a political parody. Its exposure of the behaviour of one of the Governors-General was so sensational that the Government did not lose much time in proscribing it. It is only recently that the work has been set free again.

The present century, as far as literature is concerned, may be divided roughly into two periods: 1901 to 1920, and 1920 to the present day. From 1914 to 1918 was the period of the first world war, and the effect of the war on literature began to be apparent soon after the end of the war. The present war that ended the other day will have its repercussions on literature in the years to come. Hari Narayan Apte died in 1919 and V. M. Joshi had written a couple of novels by that time. Phadke, Khandekar, Madkholkar and P. Y. Deshpande may be put down as writers in the second period. In the year 1919 died another eminent literary man, Ram Ganesh Gadkari or Govindagraj, poet, dramatist and humorist. He is easily the most brilliant among the modern dramatists and writers of Maharashtra. As a poet also he holds a high rank. Another name in the field of drama is that of

Warerkar who has written a number of propaganda dramas. The youngest of the dramatists is P. K. Atre who is a brilliant writer. He and Gadkari have a humour of their own. Atre is essentially a modern dramatist imitating the technique of Ibsen and Shaw, while Gadkari drew his inspiration from Shakespeare. Unfortunately, drama has gone into the background since the advent of the screen, particularly the talkie, and though there have been brave attempts to revive it in Marathi during the last half a dozen years, the Marathi stage is at least for the time in the darkness. Atre turned into a producer of screen pictures; perhaps he will go back to the stage. But as it is, Marathi drama is quite rich and varied. It handles social themes in an admirable way. There is no space here to describe the vast progress made by the drama in Marathi. The names referred to are indicative rather than exhaustive. Among dramatists and novelists, there are two schools, one standing for Art for Art's sake and the other regarding Art as a means to Life and Society, and controversies are continuously carried on on the subject. As a result, several people have taken to writing on literary criticism. This latest development in Marathi literature is undoubtedly a sign of its healthy growth.

The short story in Marathi is comparatively of recent origin. Phadke, Khandekar, Bokil, Y. G. Joshi and several teachers have developed their own forms of the short story. Prof. C. V. Joshi and Captain Limaye have written excellent humorous stories. Monthly journals like the *Manoranjan* have given considerable scope to writers of short stories. Kirloskarwadi, an industrial centre in Satara District, issues three journals every month, and in them are published a number of readable stories from time to time. Similarly, short essays on light subjects, travel descriptions and sketches are becoming the vogue in Marathi, and now and then one comes across good material amongst them. Mr. Anant Kaneker is a poet as well as a good writer of essays and sketches. Considerable literature has been written on political subjects. The social philosophy of Karl Marx has been rendered into good Marathi by P. V. Gadgil, a well-known journalist, while Javadekar, another journalist, has written informative and interesting volumes on political subjects.

All this progress has occurred during the last twenty or twenty-five years, and therefore it can safely be said that in the post-war period Marathi has made good progress in all directions. Its literature is growing fast, and considering that there are not more than two crores of Marathi-speaking people, the progress is very good indeed. It is the ambition of Maharashtra to have a university in which the medium of instruction and study will be the Marathi language, and all modern knowledge will be conveyed through Marathi. That is a high ambition, but Marathi is a language fully capable of fulfilling it. Three hundred years ago, nay, even as early as seven hundred years ago, the most intricate philosophic thought and argument were conveyed through Marathi in such a way that even the village people could understand. It should not be difficult for the same language to bring modern scientific thought and argument to its people. Tukaram, for instance, was a great Marathi poet of the past, who is easily understood by the people even today in spite of the profundity of his thought.

The father of modern poetry in Marathi is Keshavasuta, who has already been mentioned. Lombhe and Mogre were old-fashioned but excellent poets. Mogre has written good parodies too. He has a keen sense of humour. Keshavasuta produced some excellent lyrics, and brought out, in poetic form, the thoughts and philosophy of Agarkar. The Rev. Tilak was a contemporary of Keshavasuta. He has written some thought-provoking poetry. He is a lover of nature. Chandra-shekhar is probably the greatest master of Marathi poetry who writes in the classical style of Jagannath and Jaydev. For sheer sweetness, his pieces remain unrivalled. Vinayak has written some inspiring songs on historical subjects. "Bee" or Mr. Gupte is a contemplative poet who is still luckily with us. His poetry contains considerable philosophic thought. Tambe of Gwalior, who died a few years ago, was another poet of high rank. All these may be said to be the earlier poets of the present century or, we may call them, the elder poets. Mr. V. D. Savarkar, the Hindu Mahasabha leader, has written powerful poetry breathing patriotism. Gadkari has been mentioned as a dramatist. He is a poet too, and some of his pieces are very delightful. He is a master of

pathos just as he is a master of wit and humour in prose. Among the younger generation, mention must be made of "Balkavi", whose real name was Thomre. He is a great lover of nature, and his poetry is very sweet. Prof. M. T. Patwardhan, popularly known as Madhav Julian, is a poet of considerable force, though he is known as a fine Marathi scholar and a good critic. But as a poet too, his name will certainly endure. His long poem *Sudharak* is a fine piece that unfolds, a pathetic story beautifully told. Yeshwant, Girish, Tekade, Anil, B. S. Pandit, Kusumagraj and a host of others have contributed meritorious poetry to Marathi literature in recent times. Atre has been mentioned as a fine dramatist. He is also a poet. He is a master of parody. After Gadkari, he is probably the best humorist in Marathi. With the exception of Prof. Patwardhan (in his *Sudharak*), Marathi poets have not taken to long narrative poetry. Anant Kanekar is a fine poet among the younger generation. He has not written much, but some of his poems are very good. Kusumagraj, just mentioned, is a rising star with a bright future before him.

Marathi has made considerable progress also in biography, literary criticism and other branches of literature. One notable achievement of the present century was the publication of the Marathi *Dnyankosh* (Encyclopaedia), undertaken and carried out by Dr. Ketkar. Dr. Ketkar is also a literary critic and a novelist. Though his style is not attractive he has thought and information. He does not convey it in very good Marathi, but he conveys it all the same. Mr. N. C. Kelkar and Prof. D. K. Kelkar may be mentioned as good literary critics. Among the younger critics is Prof. R. S. Joag.

To give a full history of the progress of Marathi literature during the present century will take more space than is available here. Many writers who may have been well worth mentioning have been omitted for lack of space. But what is given above suffices to show that Marathi has been progressing very well indeed in all directions. There is considerable influence of Western literature on Marathi, and in the post-war period some of the morbidity that was apparent in light and occasionally philosophic literature of

the West is found imported into some of our writings. But with all that, progress in Marathi literature during the present century has been on the whole on healthy lines.

## 10. ORIYA

By KALINDI CHARAN PANIGRAHI

Shri Kalindi Charan Panigrahi, B.A., Publicity Officer of the Eastern States Publicity Bureau, is an essayist and novelist in Oriya, which language he represents on the All-India Linguistic Committee of the P. E. N. His Oriya novel *Matira Manisa* (Man of Clay) has been particularly well received.

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To describe fully the growth of Oriya literature during the past fifty years requires more time and space than there is at my disposal. The growth is so varied and vast that it would be very difficult to present faithfully all its aspects in a short compass.

As I turn my eyes on the past and look beyond the present century I feel our mighty singers outshining all that the modern age has produced. Who, in fact, have inspired more awe and admiration in us with their unparalleled mastery over vocabulary and rhythm ? Who, for instance, have sung of love with more passion and pathos in its magnificent glory and multifarious phases ? Where else is the delineation of love and beauty more natural, human and real than in the *Prema-Sudha-Nidhi* (The Treasure of Love's Nectar), the *Lavanyavati* (Beauty Queen), or in the *Vaidehisha Vilas* (The Love of Vaidehi or Sita) by the great Poet Upendra Bhanj, or in the *Kishore-Chandranan Champoo* (Love of Krishna and Radha) by Kavisurya Baladev Rath ? By whom has love, the eternal theme of poetry, been depicted as more spiritual, supernatural or godly than in the *Bidagdha Chintamani* (The Supreme Thought of the Lover), an epic on Radha and Krishna, of our immortal Abhimanyu, in the *Rasa Kallola* (Current of Love), of our Dinakrushna, or in the

*Mathuramangala* (Blessings of Mathura) of our Bhaktacharan? Who has ever excelled them in the melody of music, rich imagery, metaphor or alliteration? As poets of nature and of mysticism, they still occupy an enviable position. Who again in the modern age has displayed a more gifted genius than Mahakavi Sarala Das whose wonderful description of the warfares of the *Mahabharata* is as true as life itself?

A change in forms and style was, however, noticeable with the advent of English education. Orissa came under the British as late as 1803, and the influence of English on Oriya literature came to be felt in the latter half of the 19th century. In a sense the change was startling. Oriya literature now entered into a new era, and appeared in a different garb. Prose was born and occupied a larger position in our literature than poetry. Both in prose and in poetry the conspicuous feature was the love of country or patriotism, hitherto unknown in Oriya literature. Powerful writers led by Radhanath Rai, Fakir Mohan Senapati, and Madhusudan Rao started writing songs, lyrics, romance and fiction in a new style with a new technique. The trio, followed by many others whom we mention later on, were born in the nineteenth century and died in the twentieth. Oriya prose came into being and took its shape in the hands of Fakir Mohan Senapati, who is truly regarded as the father of Oriya fiction. Oriya life received faithful treatment from him. The age-old conflict between the rayat (peasant) and the zamindar (land-lord), the peasantry and the middle class, their sorrows and happiness, struggles and failures, are vividly portrayed in his books.

Oriya poetry underwent a great change. The old and crowded similes and metaphors, alliteration, imagery, the breath-taking rise and fall of drawn-out cadence, the intricacies of meaning and the wordy exercise were replaced by a style, a diction and a rhythm which were amazingly simple and easily intelligible. Poetry in the past used to be recited by one or more at a time. Now it could be read by oneself and it brought solace. It provided a relief for the brain and did not require much effort to recite or to find out its meaning. At the same time it embodied great thoughts.

The printing-press put an end to copyists as machinery kills home industries. The simplicity of form and technique of the new poetry did away with the need for professional singers and dancers who not only served the purpose of a printing-press by reciting the poems but also interpreted them to large audiences.

The new era produced a class of readers who were urban in outlook. The printing-presses also were in towns. Radhanath and Madhusudan held important posts in the Education Department. They wrote text-books for schools. But a modern author could be popular only among the educated whose number was extremely limited. He could hardly reach those who were deprived of modern education. As compared with this, even today many of our children sing the sweet lyrics of the early and medieval periods, such as *Koili* (Cuckoo), *Gopibhasa* (Lamentations of the Gopis) or the *Bhagavata* in the old *Chatsali* or rural schools. Our villages and towns still echo with the old devotional *Bhajans*,<sup>1</sup> *Kirtans*,<sup>2</sup> *Jananas*,<sup>3</sup> *Chautisas*<sup>4</sup> and *Sangitas*<sup>5</sup> at various musical entertainments. Upendra Bhanj, Abhimanyu Samanta Sinhar, Dinakrushna Das or Kavisurya Baladev Rath are more familiar to the masses than even Radhanath or Madhusudan. The critics who hold modern authors and poets responsible for this, however, betray an utter ignorance of the many forces that have brought about the present state of affairs.

Radhanath shaped his characters according to his own choice. He painted the kings of Orissa and their courts,

<sup>1</sup> *Bhajans* are songs written in simple language. The word means meditation on God. Ordinarily with the help of symbolism *Bhajans* explain the Yogic system and the philosophy of the Vedanta.

<sup>2</sup> *Kirtans* or *Sankirtans* are songs of praise glorifying Lord Krishna. They are sung to the accompaniment of drums and dances.

<sup>3</sup> *Jananas* mean prayers which are recited by the devotee by himself without any musical instrument. They deal with worldly sorrows, wants and failings and implore the Lord Almighty for relief from them.

<sup>4</sup> *Chautisas* are songs, each stanza of which begins with a letter in alphabetical order thus completing thirty-four stanzas with all the thirty-four letters of the Oriya alphabet. *Choutisa* means thirty-four.

<sup>5</sup> *Sangitas* are songs dealing with the love of man or of Krishna and Radha and are often amorous.

their prowess and weaknesses, love and hatred, beauty and ugliness, with the brush of an accomplished artist. But he stands superb primarily as a poet of Nature. Nature was more real to him than man. Hill and dale, lake and river, bird and forest were dearer to him than the companionship of man. In his wonderful epic on the Chilka Lake, his worried soul finds solace in the heart of Nature.

His total rejection of the vain and ostentatious aristocracy or semi-aristocracy was eminently manifest in his *Durbar*, where he describes those who came to receive laurels and titles or regarded themselves as honoured in being invited to the Durbar held by the Governor, and were much concerned about the position of seats allotted to them. Radhanath depicts the so-called aristocrats in their true colours and mercilessly attacks the unreal and artificial civilisation of which they were making a dress rehearsal. He sneered at their vanity of wealth and power and asked them to be real men rather than the pale imitation of lawyers, police and magistrates that they were. The poet's sarcasm and scorn directed against these Durbaries was indeed biting. *Mahayatra*, or the "Journey's End" of the Pandavas is considered to be his masterpiece wherein he again deals disparagingly with the reactionary forces of society. But he has failed to point out the key to the solution of social problems without the possible help or intervention of Divine powers. His writings were an eye-opener to the actual state of things existing and created a strong resentment against the follies of society.

Madhusudan was immensely successful as a writer of devotional songs and lyrics in a style and a language at once pure and refined. He inspired love of God in the hearts of his readers. Himself a religious preacher of the Brahmo Samaj, he handled only such themes as were chaste, pure and religious. He is popularly known as the Bhakta Kavi.

Madhusudan was the mystic poet of Oriya literature. He regarded truth above everything else. Radhanath's approach to truth was through beauty. He prayed with folded palms :—

"Carry me on the path of truth and piety, O Lord !  
Let my life float in your love's current,

O Lord of All-Shelter,  
I dedicate this life at Thy lovely feet."

Madhusudan is said to be at his best in *Rusi Prane Devavataran*, a long poem written in the vein of the Vedic hymns and describing the divine inspiration of the primitive Rusi at the sight of Usha, the first flash of the light of dawn over the Himalayas.

Fakir Mohan wrote novels, short stories, satires and a beautiful autobiography in his inimitable prose. For his stories and novels he found the richest treasure-house of language in the speech of the common man, of the simple village folk. He was the first and foremost writer to discover the glories of the Oriya language. He did not look for the plots of his stories among kings and courts—the heroes and warriors of the past—who were once the leaders of society. He did not take a morbid view of life that leads to defeatism and frustration. His characters were all ordinary men and women whom we see every day around us, with their vanity and humility, success and failure. Having no conflicting ideologies or slogans to worry about, they are just plain men and women. They deal in a direct manner with hard facts against which they come. These people live and die for "Six Acres and Eight Gunthas"<sup>1</sup> of land (*Chha Man Atha Gunth*). Fakir Mohan was never in want of a plot. They always crowded his path. Even the villain in the story was nearest and dearest to him, and he painted such a character with the same love and sympathy as he did the best of his characters. His *Mamu*, *Prayaschitta* and *Lachhma* are notable contributions to Oriya literature.

A number of minor poets headed by Gangadhar Meher and Chintamani Mahanty took up the chain left by Radhanath. Gangadhar was a born poet with very little schooling. His *Tapasvini*, a characterisation of Sita during her incarceration by Ravan, is regarded as a masterpiece. But at times he fails to maintain the required gravity and force of style and expression. Chintamani wrote voluminous poetry and fiction in a language uniform and dignified throughout. Sometimes his writings have suffered from the cheapness of overproduc-

<sup>1</sup> A *gunth* is twenty-fifth part of an acre.

tion. He was as much admired by his readers as Gangadhar was loved by them.

Just like fiction, the drama came into being as a new feature of modern literature. In the field of drama the late Ram Shankar Rai and Rai Bahadur Bhikari Charan Pattanaik made contributions. The late Radha Mohan Rajendra Dev of Chikiti also wrote a number of plays. They were followed by the late Kamapal Misra, whose *Sita Vivaha* or "Marriage of Sita" made a mark in the field of Oriya drama for its forceful style and expression. Sri Aswini Kumar Ghosh has written the largest number of plays and is likely to become the most popular playwright in Orissa. He usually takes his plots from mythological or historical tales. He is now dealing with social plots centring round a problem.

The late Gangadhar Meher and Chintamani Mahanty were followed by a group of writers who have helped in the historical development of Oriya literature. They are the late Nanda Kishore Bal, Pandit Gopabandhu Das, Sri Padma Charan Pattanaik, Sri Nilakantha Das, Sri Narayan Mohan De, Sri Godavarish Misra and Sri Lakshmikanta Mahapatra. They showed great promise at the beginning. Of these the late Nanda Kishore Bal made a bold departure from the Radhanath group and proved like Wordsworth that good poetry could be written on common themes and in the simplest language. The late Pandit Gopabandhu was gifted with poetic genius of a very high order. His *Kara Kavita* written during the period of his imprisonment, and his *Dharma Pada* which deals with the fourteen-year-old sculptor who sacrificed his life in completing the construction of the famous temple at Konarak, still inspire readers with patriotism and with the spirit of sacrifice. By his unique prose style he not only captured the mass mind but also won the estimation of the intelligentsia.

Sri Padma Charan, who showed good promise at the beginning, found little inspiration in poetry as he grew older. His *Dhauli Pahar*, *Charan* Poetry of Rajputana and a number of other poems were throbbing with life, and were characterised by a command of language, thought and pathos which even great poets could envy. He was equally good in prose. But he exhausted himself by the time he reached middle age.

We have put Lakshmikanta, better known as Kanta Kavi, in the above group in respect of his age and wisdom. But he is behind none in his youthful spirits as a living author. In fact he is the only one of the group who has not found any other vocation preferable to literary pursuits. He is the author of some of the best national, devotional and love lyrics in Oriya. He is unexcelled particularly as a parodist and author of humorous sketches. He is the chief editor and life force of *Dagaro*, the *Punch* of Orissa.

Well-read in Sanskrit, Sri Nilakantha Das acquired an exceptional mastery over the language. His *Konarke* and a free translation of Tennyson's *Enoch Arden* and *The Princess* were his noteworthy contributions. For some time he brought out a monthly magazine named *Naba Bharat* and was its editor. It was considered to be the best monthly magazine and created a stir among writers. But it was short-lived.

Sri Godavarish attempted dramas, as well as poetry and prose. His *Purusottam Dev* and *Mukunda Dev* are well-known historical plays, the heroes of which are two illustrious Rulers of Orissa. He is remembered especially for some of his ballads in which he was at his best. But he too exhausted himself by middle age, like most of his contemporaries.

In prose, the late Biswanath Kar, Gopal Chandra Praharaj, who died a tragic death recently, Jalandhar Dev, Sashibhusan Rai, and the late Divyasingha Panigrahi are the most eminent. Biswanath edited the monthly *Utkal Sahitya*, which at one time provided a training ground for twentieth-century writers. The acceptance of a story, an essay or a poem by the veteran editor was a distinction coveted by writers. *Bibidha Prabandha*, a collection of his essays, set up a standard in the domain of Oriya prose for masterly treatment, clarity of expression and dignity of style.

Gopal Chandra Praharaj was gifted with a facile pen. His style was as interesting and prepossessing as a story. He was supreme as a critic and a humorist. Scathing criticism of men and affairs in an inimitable style that catches the reader from the very start was his speciality. His flow of language carries one as if by storm, and his ticklish humour forces one to laugh after every sentence. The author of *Bhagabat Tungire Sandhya* (Evening in the Village Club) and

*Nananka Bastani* (Father's Old File), he devoted himself towards the last period of his life to the compilation of the great Quadrilingual Lexicon consisting of seven huge volumes.

The *Mukura*, a monthly magazine, was edited by the late Braja Sundar Das and became very popular. Braja Sundar's literary output was quantitatively small but his judgments were always valuable. Sri Sashibhusan Rai, son of the late poet Radhanath, is a prolific writer in prose. He has covered numerous subjects and is ever ready with a manuscript. The most original in the group is Sri Jalandhar Dev, a septuagenarian, and the late Mohini Mohan Senapati, son of Fakir Mohan, who may be rightly termed free-thinkers because of the spirit of challenge in which they take up old traditions and religious dogmas.

The late Divyashinha Panigrahi succeeded Fakir Mohan as a writer of short stories and novels. His novel *Tu Mo Ma* (You Are My Mother) is an approved text-book, and *Amrut Kankan*, a collection of his short stories, is widely appreciated. Rai Bahadur Artaballav Mahanti, Rai Bahadur Bipin Behari Rai, Sri Ratnakar Pati, Sri Girija Shankar Rai, Jonathan Mahanti, Lakshmi Narayan Sahu and many others can be included in the list of prose writers of today. Sri Girija Shankar has contributed a valuable book on the history and development of Oriya drama and philology, and Rai Bahadur Bipin Behari and Sri Ratnakar Pati have written a number of thoughtful essays on social and philosophical subjects.

Rai Bahadur Artaballava Mahanti, the author of the *Prachi Samiti*, rendered noteworthy service to Oriya literature by bringing out some very good poetry from the unpublished storehouse of the past. His corrected editions of old books, with prefaces, are the best in the market. Sri Chakradhar Mahapatra is remembered for his labours in collecting folk-songs.

Among women writers of the present century, the late Kuntala Kumari Devi stands foremost in respect of both prose and poetry. *Anjali* and *Archana* containing her devotional poems were followed by a number of novels. She wrote her masterpieces, *Raghu Arakshita*, a novel, and *Prema Chintamani*, a book of poems, after her marriage. Her life was cut short at the age of 38. Her *Ahwana* was proscribed by the

Government owing to its fiery national utterances.

Kuntala Kumari is dead. But many of her contemporaries are still living. It is not possible in a short compass to do justice to their contributions. A mere cataloguing of their names and works will not suffice. Many of them are still in the making, and are coming to the forefront while others are receding to the background. All of them constitute a great body of workers toiling in the field of literature.

It must be admitted that with the advent of the present century, poetry lost much of its ancient grandeur and appreciation. Kuntala Kumari, who was widely admired, had to publish her own poems, as no professional publisher would take the risk, and Sri Baikunthanath, among living poets, had to bring out a collection of his poems through the financial help of a Maharaja. Perfect in rhythm and diction, his poetry covers a vast field and burns with the flame of love and sacrifice. He is one of the "Sabuj" group of writers who are considered to have turned away from the traditional modes of literary creation. Dr. Mayadhar Mansingh was loved by the younger generation for a number of sensuous love-poems, the first collection of which he brought out under the name of *Dhupa* and published himself. Sri Nabakishore Das has a tendency towards symbolism and mysticism, while Sachi Routrai and Comrade Ananta Pattanaik have written inspiring songs fired with the spirit of revolution. Sri Radha Mohan Garnaik is an exception in that his poems were taken up by professional publishers.

*Deshara Daka* by Sri Harish Chandra Baral and *Gauda-Vijeta* by Sri Ramaranjan Mahanty are two specimen plays of the later group of dramatists, with historical and social background respectively. *Dharma-Patni*, a social drama by Sri Laxmidhar Nayak, was performed on a professional stage. Sri Kali Charan Pattanaik, who enjoys the advantage of being the manager of his own stage, has written a number of plays and staged them. The two professional stages including his own are giving regular performances at Cuttack. Some social plays dealing with the present problems of unemployment and hunger were presented to crowded audiences on successive nights. But few writers of any outstanding merit

have been encouraged to write plays, as apparently the management experiences no difficulty in running the business without them.

The short stories and national songs of Sri Godavarish Mahapatra are infused with the love of country and of the people. They are as realistic as the short stories of Sri Ananta Prasad Panda or of Sri Rajkishore Roy, some of which have a psychological background.

Sri Kanhu Charan has written a number of novels of which *Ha Anna*, a picture of scarcity and hunger, is considered to be the best. It is used in Colleges as a text-book. Sri Govinda Chandra Tripathi, Raj Kishore Pattanaik and Gopi Nath Mohanty have also written interesting stories and novels.

They, with others who are too numerous to be mentioned in this short sketch, but who on that account are in no way less important or representative, are a band of writers who champion the new age and are enthused by the modern trend of national and international literature. Their brilliant labours in the field of poetry, prose, fiction and drama can be well compared with those of some modern English or Continental authors. With almost all of them literature is no longer an aimless pursuit. Art for art's sake is not their cry. They do not rest content with singing the glories of the universe or the beauty of nature alone. Literature is not for them a luxury for the idle but a vital necessity for human society. It is the life-current moving society along and, while moving, reshaping it for the morrow. The Oriya writer of today realises his immense responsibility. The ghastly memories of the great famine that occurred in the middle of the last century and swept away one-third of the population, according to official reports, and the consequent condemnation of British administration by such eminent English authors as John Ruskin, are still fresh in his mind. He is fully conscious of the dumb millions daily dying around him without a morsel of bread and without a word! The Oriya writer is now telling the story of those who cannot speak for themselves. His literary efforts are to express the word of the dying and the dead, too feeble to be heard. Literature to him is a dying declaration. He has come near to life and

the world around is dear to him. He does not seek refuge and shelter in the heart of Nature like Radhanath. Nor does he make his offerings and dedicate his life like Madhusudan to an unknown god ! He does not believe in an after-life. If there be anything worth achieving he believes that it should be achieved now and in this life. He is out to make the world more habitable for himself as well as for his fellow beings. !!

Sanskrit scholars once shunned Oriya as a *Paisachik* ( uncultured ) language, and the *Bhagavata*, construed in Oriya by Jagannath Das, a contemporary of Chaitanya, was rejected by them on this ground. With the advent of English, almost the same treatment was meted out to Oriya by the few who were privileged to receive English education. But such an attitude of contempt for the language has made the Oriya writer of today love his language all the more, and also love those who use it in their thought and speech.

The Mohammedan conquest of their province made Oriya poets hold tightly to their religion and sing about their gods and goddesses. The British conquest directly affected their economic life and brought about poverty. As a natural consequence the Oriya writer of today has become realistic and is obsessed with the evils which afflict those around him.

## II. PUNJABI

By MADAN GOPAL

Shri Madan Gopal is a journalist and free-lance writer in Punjabi as well as in Hindi, Urdu and English. *Premchand*, his critical study in English of the great Hindi and Urdu novelist, appeared in 1944. Shri Madan Gopal represented the P. E. N. All-India Centre at the International P. E. N. Congress held at Stockholm in June 1946.

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The question has often been asked: Is there any such thing as Punjabi literature? My reply is in the affirmative, and an emphatic affirmative—emphatic because Punjabi literature is distinctive, suits the genius of the people of the Land of the Five Rivers as no other literature does, and because it is growing at a very fast speed, so much so that the number of books published in Punjabi during the last ten years is equal to the corresponding number during the previous twenty-five.

Throughout the ages, the development of Punjabi literature has been hindered by several factors, the chief among which are geography and history. The topography of the province has not permitted the evolution of the homogeneous language even to this day. And history has been a niggardly step-mother to the Province because, unlike the other Provinces of India, which enjoyed comparative peace and tranquillity, the Punjab was in the unenviable position of a lone swimmer struggling against a river in spate; for the stream of foreign invasion, except that from Europe, always came from the north-west, and it fell to the lot of the Punjab to bear its brunt and to deal with refractory elements within. The Province had, therefore, little time to smoke the pipe of peace and devote time to music, the dance, painting, architecture,

or literature. And whatever little work done was destroyed in the course of wars.

I might relate an incident to illustrate my point. Guru Govind Singh, one of the most colourful personalities in Indian history, attracted some 52 eminent poets from all over India to his court at Anandapur in the fastnesses of the Simla Hills, one of them being Bhai Nand Lal, tutor in Persian to Aurangzeb's sons. All these scholars translated into Punjabi works in many languages including the classics and the religious scriptures of the Hindus, Muslims, Zoroastrians and Christians. Legend says that these manuscripts collectively called *Vidhya Dhar*, weighing 18 maunds (1,476 pounds), were destroyed in one of the battles with the Moghul armies.

Under conditions of eternal warfare, the thinking section of the Punjab took to religious contemplation, and those actively engaged in war thought of love. So these remain the two dominant trends in Punjabi literature. The bulk of religious literature is in the Gurumukhi script, in which the scriptures of the Sikhs exist; and the greater portion of Punjabi literature in Persian script consists of compositions of Sufi poets and love epics, the origin of which has been traced to the romances of Greece, Egypt and Persia. During the last fifty years while literature in Gurumukhi script has developed at a very fast speed, that in Persian script has been sadly neglected, although there is a move now afoot to devote attention to it, among writers such as Dr. Mulk Raj Anand and Bal Raj Sabni, who have had contact with literary movements outside the Punjab.

Peace, which came to the Punjab on its annexation by the British in 1849, did not result in the bestowing of court patronage on the language. Urdu remained the official language, and the centre of gravity shifted to English.

But the mainstay of Punjabi literature is not the highly educated but the middle class and the masses, almost synonymous in the Punjab. While the Naqqals and the Bhands recited and staged, as they still do, the romantic tales of Hir Ranjha, Sohni Mahinwal, Sassi Punnun and the Punjabi version of Shirin Farhad and Yusuf Zulaikha, an ever-fresh source of inspiration to the toiling peasant, hundreds of smaller poets in the towns and cities write low-priced

*Qissas*,<sup>1</sup> commenting upon the past and present modes of life and everything topical, to gladden the heart of the town-dweller.

Is it any wonder then that each of the Punjab epics has been presented in slightly different versions by hundreds of writers, exercising their varying powers of imagination and their capacity to infuse local colouring? Visit the Punjab countryside and you will hear the sonorous and melodious verses of Waris Shah's *Hir*, as popular with the masses as with the educated. Life in the Punjab villages is of primeval simplicity. So is the language and so is the literature. When at the beginning of the century, national awakening set the whole of India in ferment, people looked for inspiration to the "glory that was 'Ind.' " But the Punjab had only its romantic tales in Persian script and its mystical works in Gurumukhi script to look back to. It was not enough. For over a quarter of a century, therefore, attention was devoted to the collection of manuscripts and their classification. It was an age of translations too—translations from classical Sanskrit literature and modern European and Russian literature. This phase of our literary activity is still continuing.

Bishen N. D. Puri compiled the first Punjabi dictionary and even after half a century it remains the only dictionary of its kind, although efforts are now being made to produce a new one.

S. B. Kahan Singh compiled the monumental *Gur Shabad Ratnakar*, in four parts, running into 3300 pages, which is an encyclopaedia of Sikh literature. The book is of immense value as a dictionary of Punjabi and Hindi literatures, because derivations have been given and meanings of words illustrated with quotations from works of Sikh literature and their translations into modern Punjabi.

Sardar G. B. Singh, likewise, has written two books on the *Adi Granth Sahib* and the travels of Guru Govind Singh, besides numerous works on the lives, and brilliant expositions of the works, of important saint-poets of the Punjab.

The late B. Budh Singh, a Sub-Divisional Officer in the Irrigation Department, Punjab, apart from his novels and

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<sup>1</sup> Stories written in ballad form.

plays, did pioneering work in compiling three excellent volumes on pre-modern Punjabi literature. He collected tales, ferreted out old manuscripts, and classified them according to themes in *Hans Ghog*, *Bapiha Bol* and *Koel Ku*. His *Prem Kahani* is an excellent history of Punjabi literature. An authoritative and comprehensive history of Punjabi literature in English has been written by Dr. Mohan Singh, who has also written a book on the subject for the P. E. N. series of books on the Literatures of India.

As Punjabi writers had no cut-and-dried models of standard literature before them, literary talent concerned itself with translating, or more often with adapting classical Sanskrit dramas to Punjab conditions, by giving them local colouring. Biographies, and dramatisation of incidents in the lives of people who have played a part in the life of the Province provided other subjects for their literary works—quite a few being the Sikh heroes who fought the armies of Moghul viceregents.

S. Karam Singh wrote *Banda Bahadur*, *Guru Purb Nirnai* and *Maharaja Alha Singh*. Another writer on the same lines was Bawa Prem Singh, whose style was more chaste and polished. A writer of outstanding merit is (Pandit Man Singh) Kalidas of Gujranwala, who has versified the ancient historical tales of *Rup Basant*, and the lives of *Puran Bhagat* and *Haqiqat Rai*. He, as well as Kartar Singh and Kishan Singh Arif, who have likewise dealt with events in Sikh history, are extremely popular with the middle class of the Punjab. The late Kirpa Sagar, a clerk in the Punjab University, wrote, among other works, a voluminous prose drama on the life and reign of Maharaja Ranjit Singh ; it betrays strikingly the influence of Walter Scott ; Kirpa Sagar's heroes and heroines are placed in the setting of the Jammu Hills, where he was born.

S. Man Singh, in 1927, wrote *Vikramadhwaji Natak*, based on the Sanskrit drama of the great Kalidas, and Brij Lal Shastri dramatised the lives of Shakuntala and Puran Bhagat in 1920.

But the writer whose impression on the age is deepest is Bhai Vir Singh. In quality and quantity of work, he stands far above others like a mountain peak defying the fleeting clouds. With Mohan Singh Vaidya, he has been instrumental

in popularising Punjabi among the intelligentsia and the masses, and adding thousands of words to Punjabi. He has written a number of novels, dramas, reflective and philosophical essays. But his outlook is always religious and spiritual. An interpreter of the past and one who has grasped the fundamental truths, he is a bridge between the past and the future, between literature with the traditional religious outlook of the past and the progressive tendencies of today. His *magnum opus*, *Rana Surat Singh*, an allegorical drama published in 1905, created quite a sensation. I have seen Sikhs lovingly and respectfully wrapping it in a silk cover and giving it a place by the side of the *Holy Granth Sahib*. The work, in free verse, portrays the struggle of the soul for the Oversoul. His lyrical poems collected in *Lahran de Har*, *Malak Hulare* and *Trel Tupke* remain the model of diction, simplicity and ease of expression. His poems, though very wide in scope, generally centre round Truth, Love, God and man's higher aspirations.

In *Raja Lakh Data Singh*, a drama in 13 acts, and the socio-religious novels too, reformist zeal strikes the keynote. Long sermons and windy, laboured dialogues, arrangements of plots, sub-plots on Western models, and characterisation make it a hotchpotch of Eastern and Western methods. And this is true also of other dramas produced during the first quarter of the century, which are mostly adapted translations of Sanskrit dramas.

The transition from this religious phase may be ascribed to Dhani Ram Chatrak and Puran Singh, both inspired through direct contact with Bhai Vir Singh. Chatrak is the best living Punjabi secular poet of the day. Owing to the variety of subjects on which he touches, ranging from the finer sentiments of the human heart to patriotism and reflection on the beauties of nature, and because of the spontaneous melody of his rural language, the poems collected in *Chandanwari* and *Kesar Kiari* are the pride of Punjabi literature.

Puran Singh, turned Vedantist in Japan, has interpreted the soul of Sikhism to English readers in a language of devotional ecstasy, the like of which must have inspired the translators of the *Bible*, when, at the command of James I, they wrote the poetic prose of the New Testament in 1611.

In his *Khule Maidan* and *Khule Ghund* (Open Fields and Lifted Veils) he has given us essays in sonorous, graceful poetic prose which has harnessed the Western vehicle of the essay for expressing the pulsating life of the modern Punjab. There are other writers too like Col. Bhola Nath and Gurbux Singh, the editor of *Preet Lari*, who have put this literary weapon to use.

Then there is Charan Singh, very well known for his satirical and didactic works, and better known for his light prose. He founded the *Mauji*, a weekly of wit, humour and burlesque in 1926 and created the fictitious character of Baba Variam Singh, who makes us rollick with laughter.

Lately, Ishar Singh of Rawalpindi has created Variam Singh's successor in Bhaia, a sort of Jeeves of Wodehouse. This is a development, the like of which Hindi, and particularly Urdu, cannot boast. The average Punjabi is a happy-go-lucky fellow with a lot of ready, though crude, wit; he takes life as it comes. World War I, the Akali Movement, and India's struggle for independence brought about a vital change in the outlook of the people and the writers, though the impact was not as deep as recorded in other languages.

Punjabi literature had been tied down to the past, till a new wave of thought came to it in the late twenties. It was felt that literature must be closer to the soil. The Vir Singh school had brought the language up to date. Form was there. What was needed was content. I. C. Nanda's dramas deal with real life in the present-day Punjab. A tincture of suggestion, a deep insight into human psychology, a forceful language replete with rural idiom, spontaneous dialogues—these are characteristics which distinguish it from the traditional dramas which were conventional and sometimes went to the extent of using the *Vidushak* (Royal Jester). Nanda's *Lili de Vilah*, or *Var Ghar*, *Dulhan* and *Subhadra* are truly modern dramas. Balwant Singh "Chatrak" in his *Dukhi Raja* has adapted *King Lear* to a Punjab setting.

In the field of modern poetry, writers have been able to shake off the limitations of the earlier poets. In their earlier works they were traditional, but in the latest there is depth, and the poems are closer to the soil, the idiom being rural. Their aim is to rouse the people to revolt

against the present unjust order, for the poet is essentially an idealist. A visionary with a flight of imagination, he combines a deep social consciousness born of experience in seeing the harsh realities of life at close quarters. There are two such writers, one a poet, Mohan Singh, and the other a poetess, Amrita Pritam.

The art of short-story writing has developed in recent years. There is a group of writers whose short stories betray a close grip on the realities of life. Nanak Singh, Burbux Singh, Joshua Fazal Din, are writers who have been acknowledged as writers of merit. Nanak Singh knows the middle class instinctively. He can make the reader feel happy in the happiness of the characters which he chisels, and can bring tears when the situation demands it. His language is not very polished, but his sympathetic insight into the human mind is deep. His stories are almost as human as those of Gurbux Singh are problematical. Gurbux Singh's stay in the United States of America has widened his horizon considerably. He has founded an activity school and a colony on a community model. In the field of literature he has brought out the new tendencies which guide our lives in the mechanised world of today. The theories of Freud, Jung, Adler, are well digested. Expression rather than repression of sex, emphasis on moral values rather than on traditional religion, the need for losing one's entity for uplifting the State—these are some of the traits of his stories. But there is no movement towards obscenity as in Urdu. Joshua Fazal Din has a Biblically simple style and tells lovable parables in Punjabi. Balwant Singh, Satyarthi, Bedi, Sant Singh Sekhon, Kartan Singh Duggal and Amrita Pritam are some of the younger writers with very deep sensibilities. There is nothing in their writings which can be pointed out as very outstanding; but they have struck out on a new path.

Nanak Singh is the only modern novelist who can be called successful. Left an orphan at an early age, he has been at grips with the unkindness and cruelties of a destitute's life. As stated above, he has a thorough grip on the life of the middle classes. The titles of his novels are suggestive of their contents: *Repentance*; *Noble Sinner*; *World of Love*; *Paper Boat*; *World of Poetry*; *Pale Shadows*; *Half-Blossomed*

*Flowers*; *Distant Shore*; *Step-mother*; *Garland of Tears*; *Garland of Longings*; *Trampled Flowers*; *Graduate*. It is a wide field, as wide as life; it includes in its scope everything from inhibitions, suicide and murders to petty jealousies and social injustices. Indeed, it envelopes all human activity.

This, in short, is the story of the growth of Punjabi literature during the past half-century. Whether or not the development is satisfactory, I leave it to you to judge. But I believe it is quite encouraging. Punjabi literature has not yet come of age: it is in a transitional stage.

But there are two significant observations that I wish to make, particularly when I think of the future of Punjabi—a language which is equally dear to both Punjab Hindus and Punjab Muslims. The story traced above relates to contributions made to it by Sikhs, Muslims, Hindus and Christians, but the number of names of Muslim writers is not in proportion to their population. Joshua Fazal Din in 1905 started *Sarang*, a Punjabi magazine in Urdu script, but it died an early death. The bulk of Punjabi Muslims, speaking Punjabi in their homes, express themselves in Urdu or English outside. This is indeed lamentable. If Punjabi literature is to develop fast, it is time a concerted move in that direction was made.

There is no lack of enthusiasts. Sir Shahabuddin, the Speaker of the Punjab Assembly, who translated *Mussaddas-i-Hali*, is very deeply interested in literature; we have popular balladists, like Firoz Din Sharaf and Hidayatullah, and poets like Maulabux Khushta who introduced the technique of the Persian *Gazhal* in Punjabi.

Unfortunately, however, the Punjab has been lending its talent to the service of other languages, like Urdu and English. Look at the list of eminent writers of the Punjab of today and the recent past. Dr. Iqbal; Dr. Mulk Raj Anand; Krishna Chander, Rajender Singh Bedi, Ashk, Rashed, Hafeez Jallendari, Faiz, A. S. Bokhari, Gurdial Mallik, Dharam Parkash, Anand and Manto. Nearly 70 per cent. of them have bade farewell to their mother language. If Punjabi is to develop, this process must be checked. And if that is done, it is very possible that we shall soon be well on the way towards creating a truly modern movement in our literature.

## 12. SANSKRIT

By R. N. DANDEKAR

Dr. R. N. Dandekar, M.A., PH.D., Honorary Secretary of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute of Poona, has edited the *Rasaratnatraditika of Allaraja* (Rasa Theory in Sanskrit Rhetoric) and has given editorial co-operation in the great critical recension of the *Mahabharata* which the Bhandarkar Institute is bringing out.

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It is popularly believed that Sanskrit is a dead language, and that Sanskrit literature came to an end long before the beginning of this century. A careful study of the literary activities in modern India would, however, at once give the lie to such a supposition. It will be seen that Sanskrit literature is still *living* and *growing* in more senses than one. No one, for instance, can deny that it is still part of the way of life of the people of India. Apart from this, Sanskrit literature has developed in several directions since 1900. It is proposed to indicate here briefly—and, as far as possible, in an objective manner—the main lines along which this development has been made. At the very outset, however, it must be made clear that this paper does not claim to be an exhaustive survey of all literature in Sanskrit that has been produced during the last four decades and a half. Nor will it include a critical estimate of the works of any particular writers. My primary aim in this short paper is to show that Sanskrit is at least as much a *living* language today, particularly in Pandit circles, as any other language.

To begin with, Sanskrit can rightly claim to have served as a perennial spring in respect of several modern Indian literatures. Apart from the very conspicuous influence of the Sanskrit language on modern Indian literary languages,

particularly in the matter of vocabulary, the traditions of Sanskrit literature have continued to live, even to this day, in the literatures of modern India. If we were to consider, for instance, the popular folk-songs, or the ballads sung by itinerant bards, or the well-known literary works written by eminent men of letters, or, for the matter of that, even the talking pictures of the most recent times, we should find that quite a large number of these have derived their inspiration and material from Sanskrit literature. The basic theories about literature taught in Sanskrit works on rhetoric still dominate the field of literary criticism. The concepts of *rasa* (sentiment), *dhvani*, (suggested sense), *riti* (style or diction) and the like are still the guiding principles of our modern critics. The dramatic theory of Bharata is even now not considered quite out of date. Ancient Sanskrit works, like the *Mahābhārata*, are still inexhaustible fountain-heads on which modern writers continue to draw for their themes. In philosophy and *dharma-śāstra* (ethics) modern writers have not gone much beyond ancient Sanskrit treatises. *Vyāsocchiṣṭam jagat sarvam* : whatever goes in this world by the name of knowledge is already taught by the revered Vyāsa. This claim made in regard to the *Mahābhārata* and knowledge as a whole, can appropriately be made also on behalf of Sanskrit literature in relation to a considerable portion of modern Indian literatures. In the matter of language, thought, form, and mode of expression, quite a large number of modern literary works bear an unmistakable imprint of Sanskrit. Whenever therefore such works are produced in modern Indian languages, it may be claimed that, in a sense, Sanskrit literature itself is thereby reborn. Sanskrit literature is thus not extinct in modern times ; rather it has found re-embodiment in modern Indian literatures. Works of this character produced in modern Indian literatures are indeed too many to be mentioned in this short paper. The spirit of such works is distinctly Sanskrit, though the linguistic garbs in which that spirit is clothed, are different in different cases. This is a very prominent direction in which Sanskrit literature may be said to be developing in the twentieth century.

But, for our present purpose, more relevant perhaps than this, is the development of literature in the Sanskrit language

itself. A survey of work done in several fields of Indology and Sanskrit studies, in India, during this century—like the one to be found in *Progress of Indic Studies* (published by the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute on the occasion of its Silver Jubilee in 1943)—would indicate that modern Sanskritists have devoted themselves mainly to research. The study of Sanskrit texts is being carried on, on scientific, critical and comparative lines. The texts are being reinterpreted from new points of view. But far more significant than the exegetical aspect of this study is its historical aspect. Modern Sanskritists utilise ancient texts as sources for the cultural history of this country. Their approach to Sanskrit language and literature is thus more or less archaeological. But the service rendered to Sanskrit literature by these research workers, in another direction, is indeed very great. Sanskrit literature is almost like an iceberg; perhaps a larger part of it is under the surface than outside. An outstanding feature of modern Sanskrit scholarship is the organisation of manuscript libraries in different centres in this country. A large number of Sanskrit texts have remained buried in these manuscript-collections all these days. Thanks to the untiring efforts of an enthusiastic band of workers many of these texts are now being brought to light for the first time, and some of them are being critically edited and published. The discovery of hitherto unknown Sanskrit texts, or the publication of texts which were known till now only by name, or even new texts—*i. e.*, critical editions of already published texts—all this must be regarded as an important line of development of Sanskrit literature in this century. We may call it the resurrection of Sanskrit literature.

Now before proceeding to the consideration of the third line of development, namely, works written in Sanskrit by modern writers, let us ask ourselves why these writers have thought it advisable to write in Sanskrit, when other modern Indian languages had also fully developed. An obvious answer to this question is: Because Sanskrit is still the *Lingua Franca* of India so far as the Pandits schooled in the old tradition are concerned. It plays a rôle similar to that which English plays with reference to modern University men in India. The Pandits, who have studied the ancient

*śāstras* and literature, in the traditional discipline, can communicate the results of their own study to their colleagues in other provinces only through the medium of Sanskrit. Our Universities may have relegated Sanskrit to the position of a "second language" but for these Pandits it is still the "premier" language. The experience of several *Pandit-parisads* and *vidvat-parisads*, (conferences of savants) held in recent times, has very clearly shown that neither English nor Hindustani could serve at these conferences as an adequate medium, which Sanskrit alone effectively did. It should also be remembered in this connection that for centuries Sanskrit has established itself as the language of the learned. Writing in Sanskrit therefore does not merely facilitate inter-provincial communication, but it still carries with it a distinct stamp of learning. There are Sanskritists who honestly believe that nothing of a scientific character can be properly written except in Sanskrit, just as there are many modern University men who make a similar claim on behalf of English *vis-à-vis* modern Indian languages. Moreover, a considerable section among the older generation of scholars consider it almost a sacrilege to employ any other language than Sanskrit as the medium for expressing high spiritual thoughts. For them modern languages are anathema.

Even if we leave aside this obviously one-sided view, we shall have to admit that in the matter of technical terminology, Sanskrit has a distinct advantage over other Indian languages. Terms in different branches of Indian learning, such as philosophy, rhetoric, music, etc. have become so crystallised in Sanskrit that it is often easier to write on these subjects in Sanskrit, than to translate those terms awkwardly in other languages. The development of those sciences is so very organically connected with the Sanskrit language that it almost appears as if they will not brook the use of any language other than Sanskrit. The lines on which attempts are at present being made to create an all-India terminology will clearly indicate the importance of Sanskrit in this regard. Further, Sanskrit possesses a peculiar genius which is particularly favourable for the growth of some forms of literature. The *Sutra* or the aphorism is, for instance, a unique form of literature

which could be evolved only in Sanskrit. The facility, afforded by Sanskrit, of expressing much through little has attracted many a writer in modern times. Even in the case of writings in other languages, some authors give at the beginning a few *samgraha-ślokas* (concise aphorisms) in Sanskrit, summarising their main argument. It has also to be remembered that, as the result of very long literary traditions, the Sanskrit language has acquired a special potency, which most modern languages lack. Mention may be made in this connection of those writers whose regard for Sanskrit is more or less sentimental. They write in Sanskrit because they honestly believe that by doing so, they redceme themselves of their *rṣi-rṇa*.<sup>1</sup> There are also writers who compose in Sanskrit for the sake of the very novelty of writing in Sanskrit. Lastly, Sanskrit is employed by modern writers as a medium through which to transmit modern thought to persons belonging to the older traditional discipline. Kaviraja Gananatha Sen has, as is well known, written a big volume in Sanskrit on *Sārīra* mainly comprising modern knowledge about human anatomy.

One or more of these reasons have been responsible for the many additions which are being gradually made during this century, to the already very precious treasures of Sanskrit literature. The earnestness and the enthusiasm for Sanskrit of these modern writers are undoubtedly very commendable and their literary output also is not meagre. It is impossible to do proper justice to them within the limits of this 3,000-word survey. Only a few significant contributions can be referred to here.

One of the main types of Sanskrit literature in modern times consists of original independent treatises on various subjects, such as, philosophy, rhetoric, music, grammar, medicine, etc. The eminent Pandit of Maharashtra, MM. Vasudeo-sastri Abhyankar, has written a very lucid treatise called the *Advaitāmoda* (published by Anandasrama, Poona), in which he elucidates the principal tenets of the *Sankara-Vedānta*. A similar but more technical work is the *Brahmasutranugunyā-siddhi* by Karungulam Krishnasastri. MM. Anantakrishna-

<sup>1</sup> Debt to sages, repaid by preservation of the ancient spiritual heritage.

sastri of the Calcutta University is the author of various original works on *Mimāṃsā* and *Vedānta*. By way of a sample of the deep study and fluent style of the learned Shastriji, mention may be made of the 35-page *bhūmika* which he has written for his excellent edition of the *Śārīraka Bhāṣya* (published in Calcutta Sanskrit Series, 1933) with nine commentaries, four of which are published for the first time. His own *Pradīpa*, though given therein as a commentary, is as a matter of fact an independent comparative study of the several schools of *Vedānta*. Kokkonda Venkataratnam Pantulu was one of the greatest Pandits of the Andhra country in recent times. He is the founder of an independent system of philosophy, which he calls the *Aksara-Sāṃkhya*. In his Sanskrit work, *Mārgadāyinī*, he has enunciated the principal tenets of that system. The *Darsanodaya* by Lakshmipuram Srinivasacharya of Mysore is a Sanskrit resume of the several systems of Indian philosophy presented more or less on modern lines. In addition to such original treatises on philosophy, we find that philosophical works in modern Indian languages, many of which are themselves of the nature of commentaries on ancient Sanskrit texts, are translated into Sanskrit, since they are often characterised by quite a new point of view. The Sanskrit translation, by Pandit Oke of Poona, of the old Marathi work *Jñānesvari*, is a typical example of this kind. There are also Sanskrit commentaries written on philosophical works in modern Indian languages.

Lakshmipuram Srinivasacharya's *Mānameyarahasya Ślokavārttika* is a very notable work. The *Dhātūrūpaprakāśikā* by Chamarajanagaram Srikanthashastri of Mysore is a very compendious volume containing nearly 1,000 closely printed pages and treats, in an exhaustive manner, all forms of verbs in different tenses and moods. Original Sanskrit *nibandhas* (treatises) on music, as well as the composition of Sanskrit songs set in various *rāgas* (musical modes) is a speciality of South Indian Pandits. The *Gītamahānata* of K. Venkataratnam Pantulu is written in imitation of Jayadeva's *Gita-govinda*. Pandit Bhatakhande has written a Sanskrit work on Indian music, particularly dealing with Hindustani music. Among modern Sanskrit works on *Alamkāra* must be

mentioned the *Kuvalayāmoda* by Ramashastri, which is a work on rhetoric embodying at the same time the praise of the poet's patron, Raja Sinhadri Jagapatiiraya of Peddapur. A work of a similar character is Bhasyakarashastri's *Mekādhīśa-śabdārtha-kalpataru*. Shri Yatirajasvamin, better known as Pandit Anantacharya of the Mysore Archaeological Survey, has written an erudite Sanskrit monograph on Bhamaha. The *Alamkāramanihāra* by Srikrishna Brahmatantra Parakalasvamin of Mysore is a very voluminous work dealing elaborately with definitions and illustrations of the various figures of speech. All the illustrations are the author's own and usually contain the praise of Visnu. The author has written his own commentary on the work. Narayananashastri of Nadukavei is the author of three important works on Sanskrit rhetoric, namely, *Nāṭakadīpikā*, *Vimarśa*, and *Kāvyamimāṃsā*. The *Chandacchatāmandana* by Krishnarama of Jaipur is a useful work on metrics.

A modern work of special interest is the *Viśveśvara-Smyiti* by MM. Pandit Bishweshvaranath Rau of Jodhpur, the introduction of which is published in the *Annals* of the Bhandarkar Institute. The author has prepared, on the model of the older *Smytis*, a new code, which takes into account the changed social conditions of the present times and the new knowledge brought forth by modern science. Reference has already been made to the work on medicine by Kaviraja Gananatha Sen.

Turning now to modern Sanskrit commentaries on ancient texts, we find that many of them are as good as original treatises. Such indeed is the old tradition. Ancient texts are often used by Sanskrit commentators merely as pegs on which to hang their own teachings. The commentary, *Rucirā*, on Visvanatha's *Sāhityadarpana*, written by Kavi Sri Sivadatta (published by the Venkateshvar Press, Bombay, 1916), is a fine contribution to the study of Sanskrit rhetoric. Radhamangalam Narayanasastri's commentary on *Pari-bhāsenduśekhara*, called the *Nageśoktiprakāśa*, is by itself a lucid exposition of some topics in Sanskrit grammar. MM. Abhyankarsastri's original commentary on the *Sarvadarśanasamgraha* (published by the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute) serves as a fine introduction to the study

of Indian philosophy. In his commentary on Madhusudana Sarasvati's *Siddhāntabindu* (published by B. O. R. I.), he tries to simplify the abstruse teachings of the *Advaita Vedānta*. MM. Pathakashastri's introduction to his own Sanskrit commentary on Vallabhācārya's *Anubhāṣya* contains an excellent survey of the *Śuddhādvaita* philosophy. His commentary on the *Kenopanisad* as well as Palaghat Narayanshastri's commentary on Appaya Diksita's *Madhvamukhamardanam* also deserves mention in this connection. The *Mukura* by P. Ganapatishastri is a commentary on *Kṛṣṇa-Yajurveda-Prātiśākhya*. Even scholars trained in modern universities have written Sanskrit commentaries on ancient texts. Dr. C. Kunhan Raja, for instance, has recently published a fine *Samdeśa-kāvya*,<sup>1</sup> called the *Mayūrasamdeśa* (The Peacock Messenger), (Oriental Book Agency, Poona, 1944), with his own commentary. Dr. V. Raghavan of the Madras University has written a Sanskrit commentary on Appaya Diksita's *Āryāśataka* recently edited by Prof. N. A. Gore. It is a very significant fact that the ancient literary forms of *tikā* (gloss), *bhāṣya* (commentary), *smṛti* (metrical work on law) etc. are still adopted by these writers, though their approach is certainly modern.

But by far the largest amount of work that is produced in Sanskrit during this century consists of original Sanskrit *kāvyas* (poems), *nātakas* (dramas) and the like. Modern writers have applied their creative genius to almost every form of such literature, which had been in vogue in ancient times. These modern works can be classified under several heads. Some of them are clearly written in imitation of ancient Sanskrit works. Others are of the nature of epitomes of well-known Sanskrit *Kāvyas*, while in yet another category of writings ancient literary forms are adopted for modern themes. We also find Sanskrit translations of ancient and modern works originally written in Indian and European languages. But the most praiseworthy literary enterprise is the adaptation of Sanskrit to new forms and new themes. One of Dr. V. Raghavan's Sanskrit plays, for instance, was recently broadcast with great success on the Madras radio.

<sup>1</sup> A poem whose main theme is a message sent by a lover to his beloved, through a cloud, a bird or other such romantic agent.

Modern Sanskrit literature abounds in devotional songs, like *stotras* (hymns) and *stāvas* (songs of praise), on the one hand, and *citrakāvyas*<sup>1</sup> on the other. In his valuable *History of Classical Sanskrit Literature*, M. Krishnamachariar has made a very laudable attempt to collect as much information as possible about most of such modern Sanskrit works and authors. The catalogue of printed books in the British Museum also gives much information in this regard.

Narayana Shastri of Nadukaveri in Tanjore (1860-1911) was a very versatile and prolific writer in Sanskrit. He is said to have written ninety-two Sanskrit dramas, out of which ten have so far been published. Among his other contributions are the *Sundaravijaya*, a long poem in 24 cantos, *Gaurivilāsacampū*, an *ākhyāyikā* (prose narrative) called *Cintāmani* and *Ācāryacaritra*, which is a biography of Śamkarācārya. Reference has already been made to his writings on rhetoric. His brother Srinivasasastri also was a voluminous writer. The work of Appasastri Rashiwadekar is certainly first-rate. He used to contribute regularly to the Sanskrit journal, *Samskrītacandrikā*, of which he later became the editor. He also conducted a Sanskrit paper called *Sūnṛtavādin*, wherein, with graceful ease, he dealt with a variety of topics. Apart from his lucid commentaries on Sanskrit dramas, his Sanskrit translation of Bankimchandra's Bengali romance, *Lāvanyamayī*, is worth mentioning.

Y. Mahalinga Shastri of Madras is a well-known Sanskrit dramatist of modern times. His dramas, *Udgātṛdaśānana* and *Pratirājāsuya* are very popular, and the latter has secured for him a big prize from the Sanskrit Academy of Madras. His sense of humour is very well portrayed in the *Kaundinya-Prahasana*. Pandit Ramavatara Sarma, who served as a Professor in the Hindu College of Benares, has written a short metrical history of India, called *Bhāratīyam Itivṛttam*. Of this work it is said that it compares very favourably with Kalhana's *Rājataranginī*. His contributions in other fields of Sanskrit studies also are of a very high order. Mahesacandra Tarkacudamani of Rajarampur was an eminent Sans-

<sup>1</sup> Poems whose poetic charm lies mainly in the use of figures of speech dependent on the sound (*śabda*) or on the sense (*artha*) of words.

krit poet and rhetorician of Bengal. Another very versatile writer was Subrahmanya Suri, who was a Professor of Sanskrit in Pudukotta. He has ably composed in several literary forms. Mudumbai Venkatarama Narasimhacharya, who lived from 1842 to 1928, is said to have written about 114 works in different branches of literature. Professor Hemacandra Roy of the Edward College, Pabna, is one of the many eminent university men who have taken to Sanskrit writing. The *Mañjukaritakuñja* by Mathuranath of Jeypore State is a work consisting of verses on different subjects. The author has tried to import Hindi, Urdu and Persian metrical varieties in Sanskrit.

Modern ladies also have contributed their quota to Sanskrit literature. Sundaravalli of Mysore wrote *Rāmāyana-campū* in six cantos, and Jñānasundarī, a dancing girl of Kumbhakonam, is the author of *Hālāsyacampū* in six *stabakas*. Pandita Kshamabai Rao of Bombay is quite at ease in Sanskrit, in which language she writes with as much grace and force as she does in Marathi. Her many Sanskrit works including the topical *kāvya* (poem) describing the session of the All-India Oriental Conference held at Trivandrum, and her recent *Mīrālaharī* amply exhibit all the charm of her style and also of her personality.

By his masterly manipulation of Sanskrit prose, in his works on a variety of subjects, Krishnamacharya of Kumbhakonam has demonstrated that Sanskrit is capable of expressing modern thought with as much ease and clarity as any other modern language. *Sitārāvana-samvādajhārī* by C. Ramashastri is a clever but pedantic work consisting of verses full of *slesa* (pun) and *rakrokti*.<sup>1</sup> The same verse often forms the question as well as its answer. The author has written also the *Meghapratisamdeśa*, which is intended to be a supplement of Kālidāsa's *Meghadūta*. The cloud which in the *Meghadūta* conveyed the message of the Yakṣa to his beloved now brings back the reply to the sender. The *Bhaimīparinayanātaka* by M. Ramasastri of Mysore has for its theme the story of Nala and Damayantī. C. Venkata-ramanayya of Mysore is the author of several popular *kāvyas*.

<sup>1</sup> A figure of speech consisting in the use of evasive speech or reply, either by means of a pun, or by an affected change of tone.

His *Kamalāvijaya* is a dramatic poem mainly based on the material of Tennyson's *The Cup*. *Umādarśa*, by the same writer, is an allegorical narrative depicting the deluded soul's quest for the ultimate truth. His *Sarvasamavṛttaprabhāva*, which is a work on metrics, is modelled on Kedārabhatta's *Vṛttaratnākara*. His long poems, *Hariścandra-carita*, *Nābhā-nedistakāvya* and *Viśvāmitrodantakāvya* show that Venkata-ramanayya is a versatile genius equally at home in the drama, the lyric, the narrative and metrics.

Another important direction in which Sanskrit literature has developed is in the way of publication of Sanskrit journals. This activity has grown considerably since the beginning of this century. Attention has already been drawn to Appashastri's two journals, *Samskrta-candrikā* and *Sūnṛtavādin*, which have now ceased publication. Another now defunct journal is the *Sahṛdaya*, which had kept up a high standard. The *Samskrta-sāhitya-parisat-patrikā* of Calcutta is a journal of long standing and has rendered yeoman service to Sanskrit literature by publishing a number of original compositions. The quarterly *Patrikā* which is being published for the last 25 years by the Sanskrit Mahāpāthaśālā of Mysore contains Sanskrit articles, poems and book-notices. For the most part it indulges in hair-splitting discussions on subtle, out-of-the-way textual interpretations. Among more recent Sanskrit journals must be mentioned the *Udayana-patrika* edited by D. T. Tatacharya of Tirupati, who is himself a composer; the *Amṛtavāni* edited by Prof. Ramakrishna Bhat of St. Joseph's College, Bangalore; and *Madhuravani* published at Belgaum. The *Samskrta-samjivanam* edited by Dr. Ishvaradatta, on behalf of Bihar Sanskrit Academy, is a research journal of high quality. Its latest number contains studied articles in Sanskrit on rhetoric, grammar and history. Special mention must be made of the weekly newspaper, *Samskrtam*, published at Ayodhya, whose ambition is to see that Sanskrit becomes the national language of India during the course of this century. In order to popularise and simplify the Sanskrit language this newspaper and some other journals have tried to adopt modern words and phrases after slightly Sanskritising them. In this connection reference must be made to the energetic efforts of several Sanskrit

bodies in this country to promote Sanskrit speech and writing. Conferences are held and competitions are organised with a view to encouraging a large number of people to take interest in Sanskrit and to foster it in every conceivable manner. It has, however, to be confessed that such efforts have met with only a limited amount of success. In spite of all this, owing to the efforts of enthusiasts, the extent of Sanskrit literature produced during the last forty years and more is, as has been indicated, fairly vast. We have dealt with only the published writings; but there are also many authors whose lucubrations are still buried in manuscripts.

Nevertheless, it must be admitted that, in modern times, Sanskrit literature is written and read mostly only as a matter of curiosity. The emphasis on research work in the field of Sanskrit scholarship has certainly been detrimental to a literary cultivation of Sanskrit. Even in whatever has been produced in Sanskrit, writers still adhere mostly to old forms and old themes. Sanskrit literature is therefore very much isolated from the life of the people at large. Hereafter Sanskrit literature can hardly hope to be the people's literature—perhaps, throughout history, it has never been so. All the same it is equally certain that as long as Bhāratavarṣa continues to be watered by the sacred rivers, the Gangā and the Yamunā, and as long as the sublime Himalaya and Vindhya continue to grace this land—so long will Sanskrit literature continue to be produced and to be held in high esteem.

## 13. SINDHI

By LALCHAND A. JAGTIANI

Shri Lalchand A. Jagtiani is the author of several works in Sindhi, dramas, a novel and a collection of essays. He is also the translator into Sindhi of *The Gardener* by Rabindranath Tagore.

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With the opening of the 20th century, the growing impact of Westernism shook the very foundations of the old culture moorings. The result was an intense desire for doing away with the past, and for breaking new ground in all departments of life.

The challenging attitude towards the older values became persistent and searching in the Sindhi literature of the first two decades of the present century. Not only was this intellectual restlessness glaringly visible in the content of Sindhi literature, but also in its form. We shall here deal briefly only with a few representative writers.

During these two decades, Dayaram Gidumal, Bulchand Kodumal, Bulchand Dayaram, Kouromal Chandanmal, Parmanand Mewaram, Nirmaldas Fatehchand, Kalich Beg Mirza, Allah Bakhsh Abojho, Mohammed Hashim Mukhlis, Shamsuddin Bulbul—all rendered yeoman service to the enrichment of Sindhi literature. They started writing in the latter part of the 19th century; but their contribution to the development of Sindhi literature in the earlier part of the 20th century was in no way insignificant. They wrote in a style that was clear and definite, free from all artificiality and ambiguity.

Kalich Beg surpassed all his contemporaries in the volume of his contribution to Sindhi literature. Himself a born poet, in the early eighties he started writing Sindhi

prose, and produced something that was till then wanting on what may be called the form side of Sindhi prose. He developed a style that was easy but inimitable, clear and agreeable. And it rose frequently to rhythmic beauty. His *Zinat* and *Dil Aram*, two original novels in Sindhi ; his *Hasna Dildar*, *Shah Elia*, *Aziz-ain-Sharif*, *Shamshad Marjanch*, adaptations respectively from Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice*, *King Lear*, *Two Gentlemen of Verona* and *Cymbeline* ; his *Feroz Dil Afroz*, adapted from Lytton's *Morning and Night*; his *Neki Badi* and *Shakuntala*, taken respectively from Urdu and Sanskrit, are all of sterling worth, in plot, characterisation and dialogue. His poetic effusions are, likewise, enchanting. They are the outpourings of a soul imbued with love of Beauty and a sense of universalism. His *Saudai Kham*, *Chandan Har*, *Motyun-ji-Dabli*, *Amulh Manik* and *Rubaiyat-i-Khiam* are cast in moulds which, though new to the genius of Sindhi, have caught the imagination of the people.

Kouromal Chandanmal was second only to Kalich Beg in the matter of contribution. His early writings, *Pako Pah*, *Phul Malha*, *Lilawati*, are decidedly in a style that is not loaded with pedantic erudition. It has an individuality of its own. One can say at the very outset that it is Kouromal who is talking, and none else. His was a versatile genius. He wrote on varied subjects. This veteran in his later days, however, exhibited tendencies that marred the beauty and effectiveness of his earlier style. He came to develop a love for Sanskrit, excessive use of which in his compositions, rendered his diction heavy and cumbrous.

Parmanand Mewaram, a Christian by faith, has left his impress on Sindhi literature, in the form of essays and short stories. He constantly wrote for *Jole*, a Sindhi journal he started for propagation of his new creed. And he made of journalism a most effective literary form. In the columns of his fortnightly, he expressed himself with a vigour and sincerity that held the reader spell-bound. His is an individual style—easy and vital. He has a ready instinct for good Sindhi prose. His prose, accordingly, is far more readable and attractive than some others wrote about this time. It is remarkable for the choice of phrases, rounded and clear

composition of sentences, and sweet cadence of clauses. And though he never aims at fastidious workmanship, he uniformly maintains a high level of idiomatic charm.

Nirmaldas Fatehchand, both a poet and a prose writer, is a rare possessor of a heavy but picturesque style. His writings, *Sarojini*, *Drupadi*, *Kaikaus* and *Dalurai-ji-Nagree*, all bear an impress of his scholarship.

Shamsuddin Bulbul and his compeer, Md. Hashim Mukhlis, two redoubtable masters of fun and frolic, irony and satire, wit and humour, rendered unique service to Sindhi literature by their contributions in lighter vein. In the execution of their art they did sometimes trespass beyond the limits of decency; but it cannot be denied that by their gushing joviality and cutting sarcasm, they afforded mirth and merriment to high and low, young and old.

There is yet another writer of this period who deserves special mention. He is Tolaram Balani. He was brimful of enthusiasm and penetrating intellect; his death by drowning took away more fearlessness, sparkle and fire than was available in all other political prose-writers of the period. He may rightly be described as the pioneer of fearless political journalism in Sindhi.

During the subsequent two decades and a half, the amazing annihilation of space, the awakening in the minds of people of a sense of their national life, and the development of a social conscience have stirred fresh currents of thought and kindled new desires. And one is heartened by the fact that Sindhi literature, like its compeers, made many strides during this period, showing the richness and variety of its content and form. Flights of romantic imagination, for instance, gave place to a more sober view of life. And human nature and experience came to form the subject-matter for short stories, one-act plays, essays, etc. There has been an uninterrupted stream of essays, short stories, prose poems, etc. And it is no exaggeration to maintain that Sindhi literature is on the high road of creativeness.

Sindhi poetry, that was till very recently permeated with the deep subtleties of Sufistic philosophy, has now lifted itself out of its mysticism and, in a manner, become congenial to the modern mind. It has evolved for itself its own

literary forms: Blank-verse, prose-poems and even sonnets. And many a gem serene has been cast up from the sea of Sindhi literature.

Kishinchand Bewas's *Garib-ji-Jhupri* and *Porhyat* betray his socialistic outlook on life; and he expresses himself with a lucidity and a sincerity that are gripping.

Lekhraj Aziz, in a way more scholarly, spoils the effectiveness of his style by an excessive use of Persio-Arabic phrases beyond the comprehension of the ordinary reader.

Hyder Bakhsh Jatoi is a first-rank poet. His poetry is replete with revolutionary and independent ideology. He is well-known for his communistic outlook and his leadership of the peasants. He never fails to champion the cause of the under dog. His *Shikwah* is a rare gem of Sindhi poetry, but its outspokenness and iconoclasm are "shocking." Jatoi's *Daryah Shah* is incomparable both in the grandeur of its conception and the excellence of its presentation. It is lullaby and panegyric combined in one. It is addressed to the Indus with a melody that has a charm of its own.

Hundraj Dukhayal's patriotic poems have a fervour and flavour of a rare quality. Owing to their simplicity and sad but sweet plaintiveness they make a strong appeal to all and sundry.

Akbar Ali Ayaz, young in years, abjuring all narrow communalism, has switched on to Revolutionary Nationalism, and promises to be the Nazar-ul-Islam of Sind.

Hari Dilgir is easily the children's poet. His poems, composed for children, read like those in Tagore's *Crescent Moon*.

That poetry has little to do with literacy is proved by the fact that Sindhi village folk, though steeped in illiteracy, continue to pour out their effusions, that could rightly be classed as poetic literature.

Of Sindhi prose-writers, Bherumal Mahirchand rightly belongs to the older generation; but he is still going strong. In his early days, he had tried his hand at versification as well, and produced narratives and lyrics of high quality. His *Thomas Roe* is unique for simplicity of expression and depth of feeling. His poetic renderings of *Time*, *Mother* and *We Are Seven* are marvellous. Even in their Sindhi garb, they

maintain their native charm. Bherumal's prose writings are replete with anecdotes and varied descriptions. But of late his writings have tended to become prosaic and flat. This is probably due to his having taken to a very serious study of philology. He is also, in collaboration with the writer of this note and two other Sindhi scholars, O. H. Ansari and Din Mohammed Wafai, working at a Standard Sindhi Dictionary. He has, accordingly, developed a keen sense of precision and accuracy, the constant impact of which on his writings has deprived them of their former vigour and virility. He is no more able to write with the abandon that was so characteristic of him. One may even detect a peculiar insipidity in his compositions.

Wadhumal Gangaram is a racy prose-writer. With the aid of the fewest possible words, deftly arranged in short, crisp sentences, he paints striking pictures of Sindhi life as it obtained in the early nineties, and as it is now. His idiom is apt and his phraseology rich. He writes in a purely homely style. There is no attempt at creating literary effect. All the same it is there. His motive is clear. It is to touch a living chord in the reader's heart, and to vivify him to action.

Jethmal Parsram has utilized Sindhi prose as an instrument for the expression of his philosophical speculations, political polemics, social thoughts and journalistic realism. He writes with ease and intimacy that are not divorced from dignity and charm. It is he who, in a large measure, has brought philosophy out of the "Closet" and made it dwell in the "Cottage." His *Om-ji-Akhani*, though rather loose in construction, are easy of comprehension, couched as they are in a direct and clear style. In tackling political and social problems, he spares none. He is fearless, dogmatic and vehemently assertive. He slashes with his satire and mockery those who differ from him. He is easily the first to address himself to depicting the seamy side of city life. And by his writings in *Hind Wasi*, *Bharat Wasi*, *Prakash* and *Sindhuri*, all now defunct, he created quite a furore.

Dwarka Prasad, the hero of many a political battle, has of late taken to writing about ancient Sind. He has put on the market two volumes, and proposes to complete the series by adding four more. His is a lucid, harmonious and

apposite style, free from all looseness and ambiguity. His sentences are well-balanced. His idiom is appropriate. And there is quite a delightful plasticity about his narrative.

Narain Malkani is an author of outstanding merit. In his writings he reproduces with skill and fidelity the rural atmosphere, freely drawing on the folklore of which the poor, illiterate village people have quite an abundance. There is a strain of irresistible humour in his writings. His *Gothani Ghahr, Gujarat* and *Anar Daneh* bear testimony to the sterling worth of his inimitable style. He has translated Gandhiji's autobiography into Sindhi, and has succeeded wonderfully in conveying the spirit of the original to the Sindhi reader.

Mohammed Saleh Bhati's *Sukrat, Bibi Rabch Basri* and *Mansoor Hilaj* are sketches, cast in a pleasing and narrative form. His *Urus-i-Karbala*, a religio-historical novel, is a piece of exquisite workmanship.

Hakim Fateh Mohammed, Din Mohammed Wafai, Mohammed Siddiq Memon and Mohammed Sidiq Musafir have enriched Sindhi literature by their numerous publications pertaining to Islamic culture.

Manohardas Kouromal is a voluminous writer in his own way. But he possesses literary merit of a fitful kind. His sentences are lengthy and involved. Neither brief nor direct, he expresses himself in a roundabout manner.

Nanikram Dharamdas is an effective writer of Sindhi prose. His style is direct and homely.

Tirth Vasant is a comparatively young writer. As translator of Jawaharlal's *Autobiography* and author of *Chingun*, he has already carved a niche for himself. His style is strong, flexible and delightfully straightforward, with a touch of high imagination, though here and there it is overburdened with Sanskritic and Arabic elements. His unpublished works—quite a score of them—exhibit rare breadth of vision and a cosmopolitan outlook. In a way his expression is that of the future, and his vision of the morrow. He is assuredly a forward writer.

U. M. Daudpota deserves thanks for having edited *Shah Karim* and *Abyat-i-Sindi*. His numerous essays on

Sindhi literature and literary criticism show him to be an erudite scholar and forceful writer.

Dhanchand Daryani, M. U. Malkani, Ahmed Chagla, Lekhraj Aziz, Mohammed Ismail Ursani and the writer of this paper have probably been pioneers in the matter of improving the technique and the literary form of the Sindhi drama. Daryani's *Mulka-ja-Mudbar*, an adaptation from Ibsen's *Pillars of Society*; Malkani's *Khina-ji-Khata*, an original play, *Aziz, Gariban Mar* and *Mr. Majnun*; and the writer's *Umarain Maroi* were quite the rage of the times. They took Sindhi audiences by storm.

Assanand Mamtora, through the short story, and M. U. Malkani through the one-act play, love to utter an unexpected or awkward truth, though not with the obstinate self-confidence of a fanatic. They both take a sardonic delight in tearing the mask off social and psychological sores, couching, however, their productions in a simple, subtle and slashing style. The realistic tendency in Sindhi literature is nowhere more traceable than in the compositions of these two authors.

Nadir Beg Mirza, Amarjal Hingorani, O. H. Ansari and the present writer are by far the best short-story writers in Sindhi. Mirza's *Mohni*, Amarjal's *Ado Abdul Rahman*, Ansari's *Punj* and the writer's *Nau Varni jo Khun*, are exquisite pieces of literature. These men know the technique of their craftsmanship in all its bearings. No slipshodness is detectable in any of their compositions.

Ansari, even otherwise, is a forceful Sindhi prose-writer. He lends dignity and richness to Sindhi prose. He, however, has scant regard for facts. He gives you ideas. He holds that it matters little whether or not the views he is expounding are right. He wants you to think and feel, not to know, but to interpret, for wisdom comes that way. He revolts against the brain being a cold-storage chamber. Let it be a Power-House!

In the realm of essay writing, O. H. Ansari, Lekhraj Aziz, Lalsing Ajwani, Tirith Vasant, Gobind Bhatia and the writer of this paper have all achieved a distinct success, the peculiar characteristic of the last three being that in *Varqua*, *Chingun* and *Phulan Muth* respectively they quietly ignore all conventional modes of essay writing. They have made

of chatter a fine art, and they are easy without being trivial, simple in the choice of their subjects, but not trite in their treatment.

In the field of literary criticism, H. M. Gurbaxani easily carries the palm. His *Mugadmeh-i-Latifi*, an introduction to the study of Shah, is a unique work of literary criticism. He is probably the first great Sindhi critic, whose knowledge of European and Indian literatures has helped him by giving him a broad view of literary tastes. And as Editor of *Shah-jo-Risalo* he is the first to have given the people of Sind a correct reading of Shah's verses. A critic is supposed to be a path-finder, and Gurbaxani has, undoubtedly, shown the Sindhis grounds rich with pastures new and fields fresh. And what Gurbaxani has achieved in relation to Shah, Agha Nabi Sufi has been able to do in the case of Sachal. His *Sachal Sarmast* is a monumental work of literary criticism.

Women have also contributed their quota to the modern literary wealth of Sind. Among them Nanki Man Gidwani's name is one to conjure with. She wields a facile pen. She expresses herself with a fluency that is remarkable. Rich in idiom, she pours forth a wealth of ideas. Her writings, moreover, bear a stamp of spontaneity, original impulse and sincerity.

Guli Saodarangani has to her credit two novels—*Ithad* and *Gora*, the former an original attempt, the latter a translation of Tagore's novel of the same name. She is endowed with a marvellous gift of visualising the future. Catholic in her outlook, she expresses herself with a freedom that is not liked by the conservative element in society.

Ram Punjwani, Narain Bhambhani and a host of others are budding prose-writers of today. Ram's *Padma*, *Sharmila*, *Kaidi* and Narain's *Malhin* and *Vidva* have been well received by the reading public. These young men bid fair to come to the forefront soon and be reckoned as popular writers.

In the matter of biography and literary journalism, Sindhi literature has a long way to go. As for biography, scores of sketches, both of politicians and saints are there; but they hardly come up to literary standards. And as regards journalism, Sind can boast of only three literary magazines. These are: (1) *Sindhu*, an organ of the Sindhu Sahitya

Mandal, Jacobabad ; (2) *Sindhi Adeeb*, an organ of the Sindhi Sudhar Society, Larkana ; and (3) *Gulistan*, an organ of the Balkan-ji-Bari, Karachi. *Mihran*, an organ of the Central Advisory Board of Control for Sindhi Literature, Karachi, is in the offing. Its declared objects are :—

(a) Publishing standard articles on literary subjects.

(b) Establishing and giving currency to new scientific terminology.

(c) Giving authoritative decisions on the intricacies of the Sindhi language, and

(d) Reviewing books, pointing out their literary merits and demerits, and issuing instructions for the benefit of young authors.

The Board referred to above, consisting of 16 Sindhi scholars, has been set up by the Sind Government, with a view to giving an impetus to the growth of Sindhi literature and to infusing a spirit of research into Sindhi scholars. Under the auspices of this Board, a fair amount of research is being carried on. Attempts, for instance, are being made for reclaiming the valuable literature of old Sind, now lying literally buried in the old libraries, and owned by almost illiterate descendants of the great Sindhi savants of old.

The writer would close this note with a brief statement on his own work in the field of present-day Sindhi literature. The content of his compositions belongs to the past ; its charm too is a retrospective one. In his dearly-loved haunts it is the shadow of bygone times that he sees, rather than present actualities ; a vanished face, a hushed voice, a recollected gesture, some familiar friend, the memory of a treasured joy. He recalls them, not to wring from them some spiritual rapture or ethical significance, but merely as material for his intellect and fancy to play upon. He is a prolific writer. He has tried his hand at all forms of Sindhi literature with no mean success.

## 14. TAMIL

By M. R. JAMBUNATHAN

Shri M. R. Jambunathan is best known to Tamil readers for his ambitious project of translating the Vedas in full into Tamil. He is at present a member of the Executive Committee of the P. E. N. All-India Centre.

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Tamil is a language spoken in South India and it represents an ancient classic which is as old as Sanskrit. The beautifully carved mansion of Thirumalai Naicken of Madura, the rock-cut temple of Trichinopoly, the shadowless tower of Tanjore, the carvings of mythological heroes of Mahabalipuram and the cathedral of Ramaswaram are representative living monuments of the ancient Tamils.

Madura symbolises the oldest centre of Tamil learning, and the Chola and the Pandya kings are its historical patrons. It has its Panini in Tholkappiar, Vedic Rishi in Agastiya, Upanishadic sage in Thiruvalluvar, and Valmiki in Kambar.

Modern Tamil is spoken throughout South India.

### THE ERA OF ORIGIN :—

Modern Tamil literature can be divided into three sections—the era of origin, the era of Bharathi, and the era of Gandhiji. From the inception of the University of Madras till the rise of Tilak on the political horizon of India in 1916, there was darkness in the Tamil world and it may be called the era of origin. During this period religion played a great part in giving birth to modern Tamil. Arumuga Navalar of Jaffna was the first in the field to write in simple prose the *Ramayanam*, *Bharatam*, *Periapuram* etc. Vedanayagam Pillai's *Pratapa Mudaliar Charitram* was the first romance. *Manumurai Kanda Vachakam* of Ramalinga Swamigal was a typical book of the day, which gave in a

chaste prose the life of Cholamanu who had sentenced his own son to death for having accidentally run his chariot over a calf. His *Tiru varutpa* or inspired songs are still melodiously sung at all religious and musical gatherings. Prof. P. Sundaram Pillai's dramatic work *Monomaniam*, which consists of five acts on the model of Shakespeare, was produced at this time but it is a book more for study than for acting. *Kamalambal Charitram* of Rajam Iyer of this period is very much liked. It is fiction describing a South Indian family. "Whatever happens in life is for our benefit; the difficulties that we meet with in our way finally bring their own good; bearing these in mind, we must attend to our daily duties without attachment" is the moral inculcated in this book. There are fine descriptions of a Tamil Pandit, a South Indian Robin Hood, and several brilliant character sketches of rural men and women. The epoch-making event of the early days of the period was the establishment of the Tamil daily *Swadesamitran* by G. Subramania Iyer, one of the founders of the Indian National Congress. The language of the antediluvian poets, the treasure chest of petty chiefs and princes, the cynosure of pandits and scholars, came now into the possession of the people; the word imbued a new spirit from the masses, and recent literature was born.

#### THE ERA OF BHARATHI:—

Religion, which predominated in the early writings, now gave way to politics. *Bande Mataram*, the song of Bankimchandra, fell on the ears of the Tamils. They came in contact with Bengalis during the Congress sessions, and the worship of Mother India entered the heart of the people. The partition of Bengal, the thundering voice of Pal, and the transportation of Lala Lajpat Rai had moved the young men of South India. When Tilak came out of jail and gave the message of Home Rule, life and vigour reappeared on the banks of the Tamraparni. Self-assertion was the order of the day, and the writings of Bharathi dominated the period till the death of Tilak in 1920.

Subramania Bharathi was a poet, prose writer and translator. Teaching with words and verses that so long as there is fear, nothing helps a man, he exhorted the Tamils in his poem on "Fearlessness," to stand erect, walk straight,

and march onward.

Arguing within himself that an indecisive mind is an obstacle to attaining freedom, he wrote his *Panchali Sapatham* or "The Vow of Draupadhi." The great lady of the Pandavas was dragged to the Durbar of the tyrant Duryodhana. She was insulted in the assembly by the despot and his men. She begged, she cried, and she prayed. All was of no avail. Weak as she was, loosening her hair she took a public vow that she would not bind it up till she had saturated it with the blood of the tyrant and his men. This simple story set in metre by Bharathi has something unique in it which transforms feeble men into things of steel.

The poet, as a translator, rendered the *Gita* into Tamil, and as a prose writer he wrote a number of books. They are still a standard for contemporary writers. Writers like Bharathi are born once in a thousand years, and no one has attained similar distinction after him.

Krishnaswami Sarma's books, Chidambaram Pillay's writings, V. V. S. Iyer's *Bala Bharathi*, K. Subramaniam Pillay's *Lives of Saiva Saints*, Swami Vedachalam's erudite books, Srinivasa Iyengar's expositions and Dr. Swaminatha Iyer's autobiography belong to this period.

#### THE ERA OF GANDHIJI :—

The rise of Gandhiji, the non-violent non-cooperation movement, and the propagation of Hindi in South India have infused fervour and virility in the thoughts and expressions of present-day Tamil authors. The "Quit India" movement has opened the flood-gates of the suppressed and oppressed talents, and the huge output of books is unprecedented in the history of modern Tamil.

Kavi Ramalingam, Yogi Shuddananda Bharathi, Shri T. S. Chokkalingam and Shri R. Krishnamurthi are a few among prominent contemporary writers. Shri Ramalingam of Namakkal holds a unique position. He was born at Namakkal in the year 1888. He passed his matriculation in the year 1907. As his father was a Government servant, he was induced for some time to serve in the Revenue Department. But he resigned from the service and devoted most of his time to painting, and is at present writing verses. His portrait of George V secured for him a gold medal and

lunch with the King Emperor at the Delhi Durbar, and his verses on the Satyagraha of Gandhiji sent him to His Majesty's Penitentiary !

His poem on the Spinning-Wheel stirred the Tamil Nad. With his words on their lips, thousands heroically faced lathi charges and bayonet thrusts. His autobiography, his poems and his romance *Madhava Kamalam* are widely read. He may be called a Gandhi Poet as he is a great devotee of Gandhiji. " Kings and kingdoms may vanish, but not Gandhiji and his non-violence," says the poet. He writes in a simple colloquial style. There is charm in his words, music in his thoughts and radium in his letters. Old ideas, words and rhythms are not for him. The prevailing life and expression are what he is fond of. The deep thirst for freedom which is latent in the masses finds in his verses a fountain from which they can quench their thirst. His verses are very popular among modern Tamils. In our living memory we have not heard of any poet gaining recognition in his own lifetime. Even Subramania Bharati was not appreciated till he had breathed his last. As if to repent for their negligence to the departed poet Bharathi, Tamilians honour Shri Rama-lingam publicly with purses and addresses, wherever he goes.

Shri Yogi Shuddanandha Bharathi's *Bharatha Sakthi*, modelled on Homer and Dante, is one of the great epics of the day. In it the heroes and heroines of India are described. There is beauty in his style, melody in his words and music in his thoughts.

V. Swaminatha Sarma's books are thought-provoking, and are in a class by themselves. He is one of the most attractive authors, who has the skill and ability to present great political thoughts in a language that can be understood at once by the people.

In descriptive writings no one excels " Va Ra. " He criticises life, and has the capacity to apply beautifully and powerfully his aims and ideals, in all his books. His biography of Subramania Bharathi is the greatest prose masterpiece of the day, and Tamilians are enamoured of him.

Many women writers have now come forward. V. M. Kothanayagi Ammal's romantic novels are widely read. Shrimati Swarnambal Subramaniam—" Guhapriya "—is an

attractive fiction writer. Mrs. Bharathi is a biographer of her husband Subramania Bharathi. Ambujammal, daughter of the late Srinivasa Iyengar, is a writer whose books are appreciated. "Kumudini" has translated a number of works of fiction into Tamil.

**TRANSLATION :—**

The development of a language is accelerated by the infusion of new life into it. Translation from other languages brings into use fresh words and thoughts. Biographical literature, dramatic works, fiction and short stories give scope to a variety of expression and revelation of talent. Important translations play a great part in the progress of the language.

There is no central organisation in South India for undertaking the translation of modern books. What little has been done is by individual scholars and patriots who have done it at a great sacrifice. There are no scientific books or standard histories of the world in Tamil. Some of the popular translations in Tamil are: *Sama Veda*, *Yajur Veda* and *Atharva Veda* which have been done only recently. There are good translations of the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*. There are Tamil versions of the *Koran*, the *Sayings of Confucius* and the *Bible*. The *Satyartha Prakash* and *Ramakrishna-mirtham* are available in Tamil. Plato's *Republic*, Rousseau's *Social Contract*, Dr. Sun Yat Sen's works are popular in Tamil. Many books of the Thinker's Library and the Lectures of Ingersoll are known to Tamils. Communistic literature is being enthusiastically translated. A few books by Victor Hugo, Alexander Dumas, and Maupassant are read with great interest. The *Gulistan* of Saadi has a Tamil version. Omar Khayyam has one prose and three poetical Tamil versions. More than 13 works of Bankimchandra Chatterjee have been translated into Tamil by Mr. T. N. Kumaraswami. Fourteen of Sarat Chandra's and Romesh Chandra Dutt's novels are popular in Tamil. Rabindranath Tagore's *Wreck*, *Gora*, *Autobiography*, *Short Stories* and two of his dramas are very widely read in Tamil. Mahatmaji's *Autobiography* and all his English articles are in popular Tamil, so also the writings of Shri Jawaharlal Nehru. Prem Chand's Hindi stories and novels rendered in Tamil are to be found everywhere. Two

of Mr. Khandekar's Marathi novels are in Tamil. A portion of Tilak's *Gitarahasya* has been translated. Two Gujarati novels of Sri K. M. Munshi are also in Tamil.

**BIOGRAPHIES :—**

Biographies and lives of great men are rare in Tamil. Most of the books are written with an eye to getting them approved by the Director of Public Instruction. They are scrappy and scanty. But all glory is due to a few self-sacrificing writers who, in these days of famine and exorbitant cost of living, have found time to write in detail some good books on the lives of great men.

**DRAMAS :—**

A Tamilian loves drama and there are amateur associations in every city to enact plays. Among them Suguna Vilasa Sabha is the foremost. Most of them arrange to write their own plays. Plots for them are generally taken from the *Mahabharata*. A Tamil drama has more music in it than dialogue. Shri P. Sambanda Mudaliar is a pioneer in the field of reforming the stage. He has translated several plays of Shakespeare and they are all popular. He has written about a hundred original plays suitable for acting by amateurs. *Lilavati*, *Sulochana*, *Kathalar Kangal*, *Veda Oolagam*, *Two Friends*, and *Harischander* are some of his noted writings. Madhaviah's *Tirumalai Sethupathi* and *Barrister Panchanathanam* are typical Tamil books. V. K. Suryanarayan's *Kalavati*, *Mana Vijayam* and *Rupavati* as well as the *Manomaniam* of Sundaram Pillai, are intended more for the study than for acting. F. G. Natesa Iyer's *Gnana Sundari* portrays the feelings and sentiments of a Tamilian, while Mr. S. K. Parthasarathy's books, *Ramanujachariar*, *Sankarachariar*, *Naradar*, etc., are devotional.

**FICTION :—**

There is a great demand for fiction. People have become enamoured of it. Even the daily papers of South India feel the need of devoting several columns every week for continued novels. There are many weeklies and monthlies which devote most of their pages to fiction. Rajam Iyer's book *Kamalambal* is still a popular novel. Arni Kuppuswami Mudaliar's sensational books imitating the romantic writings in English are not now appreciated. Rangaraju's novels like

*Chandra Kantha*, *Mohan Sundaram* and *Vijayarangam* have vitality and consistency in depiction of characters. Vadavur Duraisami Iyengar's books, *Soundara Kokilam* and *Kumbakonam Vakil*, are read avariciously. Kothai Nayagi's novels are very widely read as she has an insight into human nature. She has a sensational and romantic way of narrating stories.

"S. V. V." has the skill and ability to create interest in all his writings, and craftsmanship to portray South Indian life correctly. His *Pudu Nattuppen*, *Vasantan*, *Sampath* and *Sundarammal* are widely read. *Parthipan Kanavu* and *Thyagabhumi* of Kalki are inspiring and thought-provoking. Shri K. S. Venkataramani in *Kandan* has described the rural folk. This book has a message for the people.

#### SHORT STORIES :—

A Tamilian is fond also of stories. Stories from the *Mahabharatha* are still read with interest. Stories from the ancient classics are appreciated. Subramania Bharathi's stories, *Kullasamiar* and *Navathanthra Kathaigal*, are valued for their morals. V. V. S. Iyer's story of *Mangairkkarasigal* has a heroic touch in it. Shri T. N. Subramanian's historical short stories are interesting. "Nadodi" depicts the everyday Tamilian in his book of short stories. In a country where a boy is sold to the highest bidder, the story of a Brahmin youth giving his life for a daughter of a washerman in "Va Ra's" writings is something sensational in the Tamil world of short stories. Shri A. S. P. Ayyar's stories are entertaining and popular. A South Indian, if he cannot find his food, would rather commit suicide than do harm to others. For a forlorn Tamilian the story of *Pcriasami Padiachi* in the *Katharatham* of "Devendra" is a beacon-light showing a new way pointed out by Bharathi. Innumerable short stories and hundreds of books are published. The present colossal output is bewildering, and it is not fair to review them till the passing excitement and enthusiasm get cooled and crystallised. Short stories, novels, dramatic works and lives of great men are all encouraged by the dailies and weeklies of South India.

The services rendered by the journals are unique and greater than by the academical institutions of South India, for the journals are in daily contact with the people and know their real wants. They honour knowledge wherever found,

even if it has no academic garb. They are not proud and do not have an air of superiority. They realise that they exist for the benefit of the people. They side with the people if their liberty of thinking is suppressed. They know and honour the poets and writers liked by the people. They take lively interest in the progress of modern Tamil. They are the real centres of learning in South India.

Among the several dailies, *Dinasari* is the foremost, and its Editor, Shri T. S. Chokkalingam is a pioneer in the field. He writes a Tamil which is liked by scholars and followed by laymen. Many writers owe their debt to him for discovering their own latent talent.

*Dinamani* is another daily devoting its columns to items of literary interest.

*Ananda Vikatan*, a humorous weekly, is edited by Shri S. S. Vasan. Its services to the Tamil Nad are to be written in letters of gold. The Tamils who are ever serious and sorrow-stricken smile every Sunday on receiving a copy of it.

*Kalki* is a bright journal which is eagerly read week after week by every one who knows Tamil. Shri R. Krishnamurthi is its brilliant Editor. There are other dailies and weeklies which do immense service by devoting columns to special literary subjects in their papers.

Among the numerous contributors to journals, Shri T. K. Chidambaranatha Mudaliar writes a most arresting Tamil in expositions of Kamban. "P. Sri" is another great exponent of ancient classics in a very lovely modern garb. Shri S. Vaiyapuri Pillai of the Madras University is a great commentator on the Sangam books and a reliable guide for young writers. Desika Vinayagam Pillai and "Bharati Dasan" enliven the journals by their poems and songs. Many journals depend on Shri K. R. Srinivasa Iyengar to discover new talent.

Men like Shri C. Rajagopalachariar and the Rt. Hon'ble V. S. Srinivasa Sastriar enhance the reputation of Tamils by their writings. Last but not least is the indomitable spirit of the rising young men who are determined to write at all cost books that will become immortal in South India.

## 15. TELUGU

By C. NARAYANA RAO

Dr. C. Narayana Rao, M.A., PH.D., Joint Representative of Telugu on the All-India Linguistic Committee of the P. E. N. and at present serving also on the Executive Committee, is the author of a *History of Telugu Literature* in two volumes and of numerous Telugu dramas and other works in that language. He was among the founders of the very active Navya Sahitya Parishad of Progressive Telugu writers.

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The twentieth century began with great hopes. In North India, there were signs of a great awakening. The social evils that had grown up everywhere among the Hindus and worked havoc under the name of religion had brought about a revulsion in the minds of those who came into contact with Western culture. The revulsion led to a revolt and to constructive effort for social reform under Raja Ram Mohan Roy.

What began as social reform was reflected in the field of literature by the beginning of the twentieth century in South India by Kandukuri Veeresalingam. Veeresalingam came of an orthodox Brahmin family. He had such education as he could get during those days. He had not much education in Sanskrit. What he had was acquired entirely through his own effort. He equipped himself very well in Telugu and was a voracious reader of Telugu literature. His grounding in English was of the ordinary kind, but enough for practical purposes. He was never recognized as a scholar by the pandits. But from the beginning he had an urge in him to do great things. He came early under the influence of the social reform movement which was spreading apace under

the leadership of Iswara Chandra Vidyasagar. Veeresalingam was convinced about the necessity for the movement and, once convinced, he was not the man to remain passive. He leapt into the arena. He took off his sacred thread with not a twinge of conscience. He became a Brahmo. He felt he had a mission to fulfil. His Telugu education could get him only the post of a pandit on a pittance. But it was not money that he wanted. The little he got as salary was enough for him. He was a visionary but, unlike many visionaries, a man of action, practical to the core. Pragmatic in temperament, he was concerned only with achievement and the immediate means at hand therefor. He was of the stuff of which heroes are made. Not learning but character was his strength. The will to conquer, the means and the strategy were peculiar to him.

It is not, however, with his social reform activity that we are concerned here. It is with his activity as a man of letters. Veeresalingam early perceived the necessity to employ literature as an effective instrument of social reform. He established a weekly to carry on his propaganda and a monthly journal for his literary activity. Social reform and literary reform could not be dissociated. One gave the impetus and the other served as the instrument. Week after week, and month after month, he went on with a determination that did not brook opposition, and a steady vision directing his pen. He was a monument of industry and perseverance.

He perceived early that the first and foremost need of the hour was to create a style and employ a language which could be easily understood by the mass of the population. The hide-bound pedantry that was rampant must be abandoned. Whatever he wrote or uttered must be reasonable. Conviction must be brought home not by imposing on others by high sounding words but by easily intelligible reasoning couched in a language nearest in form to the spoken dialect. It should not at the same time be far removed from the rules prescribed by traditional grammar. That was the path of least resistance. But scholarship of the right type must be maintained if only to preserve and inculcate a love for good literature, the heritage of the past. One should not cut oneself adrift from one's moorings.

Again, the country cannot isolate itself from the rest of the world. It cannot stagnate. Light must be brought in from any direction in which it is available. There is the old Sanskrit literature which was the mainstay of the nation since the dawn of history. Zeal for reform should not interfere with a love for it and for one's past. It must be preserved and transmitted to succeeding generations. It should not continue to be the sealed book that it was to the generality of the masses. The Vedas, the Smritis, the Upanishads, the Puranas, the Itihasa, yes, they are there, but what are they worth if people do not know what they contain? The *Sastras* are great, but what do they stand for? They must be explained in an intelligible manner. There are the sciences which the West is cultivating. It is necessary to bring them into Telugu if the country is to keep abreast of the times and move on in the path of progress.

Veeresalingam showed the way in all these directions. He was the pioneer of modern Telugu literature. The foundations that he laid for it have proved to be sure and strong. To critics of the present day, his attempts may look elementary. There may be much to be revised in them and reshaped. But it must not be forgotten that such progress as was achieved later owes all its inspiration and impetus to the dynamic personality of that great man who released forces which had such a far-reaching effect on the growth of Telugu literature. Veeresalingam's vision was broad and great, and his achievement stupendous in intensity and volume. There was not a field of literature to which he did not set his hand and which he did not adorn by some contribution. He knew that much had still to be done, but he lived long enough to see and bless the achievements of the movement he had set afoot.

Apart from polemical literature on social reform which attained its purpose and is therefore now of little moment, Veeresalingam left much that is worth preserving—regular poetry, satirical poetry, original Telugu drama and farce, novels, autobiography, biography, translations of Sanskrit plays, adaptations of English plays, grammar, prosody, poetics, works on Sanskrit *sastras* and modern sciences. The range of his activity was vast and varied, and his achievements astounding for a man who throughout the latter part of his

life became frail and weak from an incurable asthma which, however, he controlled by the sheer strength of his will and determination.

Chilakamarti Lakshminarasimham, "the blind poet of Andhra" is a little younger contemporary of Veeresalingam and his follower in all matters concerning social reform. Veeresalingam was not a speaker, but Chilakamarti was an orator. He cultivated oratory as a fine art. Veeresalingam never dabbled in politics—he kept himself scrupulously aloof from it,—but Chilakamarti helped not a little the spread of nationalism in Andhra by his powerful gift of speech. Chilakamarti did not strike out in the literary field in all the directions opened up by Veeresalingam. He confined himself only to two spheres, the novel and the drama, in both of which he was refreshingly original. He is the father of the drama and the novel in Telugu. Some of his works have stood the test of time and are read with avidity; and his plays have been produced on the stage for the amusement and edification of large and appreciative audiences. Humour was natural with him. He was blind from his early childhood, but his blindness never prevented him from literary effort. He had an extraordinary memory and fluency, and all his works were written at his dictation. His diction was faultless, fine and flowing; his delineation of character superb, and his execution the despair of later aspirants in the field. Though now an octogenarian, his literary endeavour has not flagged, and he has only recently published his autobiography.

About the same time that Veeresalingam and Chilakamarti were making headway, there arose two brilliant literary stars on the Telugu horizon. They were the Asvins of Telugu literature, born to lead the constellations of modern Telugu poets that were to follow in their wake and under their lead. They are the Tirupati-Venkatesvara Kavulu, names to conjure with wherever poetry is talked about in the Telugu country.

If Veeresalingam broke the shackles of pedantic diction in Telugu prose, these poets did the same for Telugu poetry. Veeresalingam no doubt began the process before them, but it was not as a poet that he excelled. Tirupati and Venkata were poets to their finger tips. They revived the free traditions

of a bygone age which had come to be forgotten, and propagated them by their personal example and poetic magic. Their enthusiasm was contagious. Their love for poetry and the making of it spread like wild-fire throughout the length and breadth of Andhra, and imitators grew in hundreds and thousands everywhere priding themselves to be called their pupils. Many were Ekalavyas<sup>1</sup> who never knew them by sight, but set them up in their hearts for admiration, praise, worship and imitation. From court to court, from town to town, from village to village, the twin poets marched, dispensing the message of a new era in Telugu poetry. Theirs was a sweeping triumphal march, and great men vied with one another to pay them homage and to do them honour. Whether it was extempore poetry, or studied as in the works they wrote, it had the same excellences, the same beauties; they were the excellences and beauties of the Telugu language. Their poetic output was indeed as vast as that of prose by Veeresalingam, and they wrote many excellent *kavyas* and dramas which future generations will read and derive delight from. Of these twins, Tirupati is no more, but Venkata kavi or Chellapilla, as he is generally called, which is his surname, is still active and is delighting and enlightening the Telugu world, though a septuagenarian.

The year 1912 forms an important landmark in the history of Telugu literature. By that time, forces set loose in the previous decade had gathered shape and had come to a point. The library movement in Andhra was its first fruit. The desire for a separate Andhra University and a separate Andhra Province was another. The necessity for a central Telugu Academy to conserve literature and scholarship was

<sup>1</sup> Ekalavya is well known in the *Mahabharata*. He was a Kirata and wanted to learn archery from Drona who, however, refused to teach him as he did not want any one to excel Arjuna, his dearest pupil. Undaunted by this refusal, Ekalavya set up an earthen image of Drona before him and practised archery treating the image with all the devotion he would have shown to Drona himself. Drona once observed him shooting and found that he had acquired skill in archery in every way superior to that of Arjuna. So, an "Ekalavya" has come to mean one who, though he does not receive direct instruction from a teacher still pursues his studies himself with devotion, setting up a great man as his model.

a third. The revival of the Telugu stage was a fourth, and so on. There was awakening everywhere, and the national movement produced by the partition of Bengal and the currents of discontent that it set up did not fail to have their effect in Andhra. The rise of Rabindranath Tagore to fame, the establishment of Shantiniketan, and the migration of Telugu young men to it, marked the beginnings of a forward movement in Telugu literature.

Just a little before this time was written in Vizianagaram (Vizagapatam District) a Telugu social play, by name *Kanyasulkam*, by a talented artist and poet, Guruzada Appa Rao. It was not meant for carrying on propaganda against infant marriages, as its name indicates. It was a real artistic literary production written for its own sake. It was superb in execution and took the Telugu world by storm, by its innate excellence. It was a new type of play in every way. It contributed "Girisam" to the array of literary characters in Telugu. "Girisam" has become a household word in every Telugu home. Guruzada also brought into vogue a new type of metrical expression which he called "Mutyalasaramu," a necklace of pearls, but which really was only the Bhamini-shatpadi metre of Kannada literature which existed once in literary compositions and is still the metre of many a Telugu woman's song. Guruzada claims credit for having rediscovered it and for creating freedom for poets to make new experiments in poetical expression. Hereafter, we find a plethora of such metrical adventures, which form the precursors of similar attempts in other parts of the world. His experiments and sallies in poetic imagination were genuine and indigenous, and were in no way connected with the fashion set up by Rabindranath in Bengal.

The greatness of Guruzada, much as it lay in his own personal contribution to Telugu literature, is to be attributed far more to his discovery of the playmate of his childhood, Gidugu Ramamurti Pantulu, who was to play the chief part in directing the trend of literary effort that was to follow.

Gidugu came on the field like a "pidugu," a veritable thunderbolt, a bolt from the blue, from an unexpected quarter. Till then, he was an educationist of the first rank. He was a lecturer in history in the Maharaja's College, Parlakimidi.

The present writer, who was his pupil and later fellow collaborator, can testify how European Inspectors of Schools, passing by his lecture room, would quietly enter and sit in a corner of the class to listen to and admire his exposition of movements in world history. He was not simply a lecturer in history working for his livelihood. He was an original experimenter in educational method, for which he was respected by the Department of Education in Madras. He was an epigraphist of note and a great research scholar in history. He was a linguist, having thorough knowledge of French and German and some Indian languages. He was a scholar in Sanskrit. Above all he was a philologist and a thorough master of the English language. He was a savant well known in scholarly circles in Europe.

His greatest contribution to the knowledge of the world was the work he did for the Savara language. The Savaras are a hill and forest tribe living in the agency tracts of the Ganjam district. Unknown to civilization, living almost naked amidst the wild beasts of the malaria-infested forests, they are a people who live a hard life of toil and labour from morn till eve. It was such a people that Gidugu had made up his mind to bring into the pale of civilized society. He went and lived among them, learnt their language, recorded it, wrote a grammar and a dictionary for it, produced school books and story books in it, got Savara schools established, took some Savara boys under his care in his own home, gave them education in English and made them pass their matriculation examination on the same footing as the highly advanced students of the plains. That was an achievement unparalleled in the history of educational effort in any part of the world, and that he should have accomplished all this single-handed and often in the face of discouragement speaks volumes for him.

Gidugu was a man of sturdy independence. He was slow to be convinced, but when once convinced, no one could deter him from acting on his conviction. His industry was remarkable. He sat like a rock before his work, and his stone-deafness, brought about by excessive doses of quinine taken for the malaria which he had contracted while living in the forest regions among the Savaras, was a blessing in

disguise to the country at large, as it helped him greatly to concentrate on his self-imposed task.

Such was the personality that Guruzada discovered. Till then he had known him only as a scholar and an educationist. Why not harness his ability and energy to bring about a revolution in Telugu literature? A revolution was indeed necessary at the time, and the time found the man for it in Gidugu.

Gidugu was not till then a scholar in Telugu. He was not even a tolerable writer. He preferred to express himself in English. Such acquaintance as he had with Telugu literature was confined to portions of works like the Telugu *Mahabharata*, the *Ramayana* and the *Bhagavata*, which formed the equipment every Telugu mother gave to her children in those days. But as an educationist, he perceived that for a rapid expansion of education in Telugu in the elementary and high schools as well as in colleges, the spoken dialect should displace the artifical, meaningless, effete jargon which filled the text-books prescribed for study.

This aspect of educational reform was discussed amongst a small circle of friends, one of whom was an enthusiastic European, an Inspector of Schools, and another a brilliant Tamilian, an equally brilliant educationist. Guruzada brought the circle into existence. Gidugu explained his plans to them. They encouraged him and lent him their support.

The first step was taken. From that time it was a period of incessant and intensive study for this great reformer. He went about the country preaching his new gospel and everywhere he met with opposition and ridicule. The citadel of orthodoxy was heavily barred against him. The aristocracy of the land was against him; the old-time scholars opposed him. Even Veerasingam stood at a distance watching the progress of the movement. A Telugu Academy was established to combat the menace to language and literature that was apprehended. The impending revolution must be checked. A monster petition was sent to Government. The legislators were influenced, and a resolution was sponsored in the Legislative Council by an eminent politician protesting against the recognition by Government of the Modern Telugu Movement, which looked innocent on the surface but which was

keyed to bring about a great revolution in all spheres of national activity. And such it really was. The Government was compelled to say that "for the present" it was not in a position to recognize for use in schools and colleges under its management the language which is called Modern Telugu.

But Gidugu was not the man to be discouraged. Every defeat gave him fresh strength. Undaunted, he delivered his attacks, resounding and reverberating, and incessantly, till at last the citadel capitulated. The way was clear and young writers flocked into the movement, enriching it in all the ways that they were capable of. A new freedom, a new strength and a new spirit spread everywhere. This was brought to a head in the establishment of the *Navya Sahitya Parishad* in 1933 at Berhampore over which the master installed the present writer as its first President and blessed the country that it may go on its unimpeded literary progress.

Gidugu lived to see the mission of his fulfilled. He died at the age of 77, with a dying message to his countrymen to keep the colours flying and to march on to fresh conquest and glory. That was a message to the whole of India.

We shall now take up the thread of our story. The Bengal school of literature under the inspiring lead of Bankimchandra and Rabindranath found its echo in Andhra. Almost all the novels of Bankimchandra were translated into Telugu. The mysticism brought into Indian thought by Rabindranath was eminently reflected in the *Ekantaseva* of Venkata Parvatisvara Kavulu who set up a new trend in Telugu poetry. At about this time, Rayaprolu, a young man, went to Shantiniketan and came back to deliver the message of Rabindranath to the Andhras. His poems which came in quick succession gained the approbation and admiration of one and all. He gained for himself a circle of imitators.

Also at this time there was another group of young writers warbling the sweet notes of the new dawn. They called themselves members of the *Sahiti Samiti* which was not, however, formally constituted. This was as it should be, for these young poets owed no allegiance to any one, much less to an institution, except the allegiance of mutual brotherhood and camaraderie among themselves. At the

centre of this group stood Tallavajjhula Sivasankara Sastry, unobtrusive, shy, capable of repressed hilarity, smiling, affable, but all the same with a driving force which kept the team going in the direction that he showed. He wrote many works each reflecting the "Sabhapati" in him. These young men are now past middle age. Tripurari bhatla, Kommuru, Kodavatiganti, Vajjhbabu, Munimanikyam, Peddibhotla, Nori, Kopalle, Devulapalli, Chinta, each a creative artist with an assured place in the history of modern Telugu literature. Wumana, Basavaraju, Abburi, Nanduri, Katuri, Viswanatha, Sripada, Mokkaputi, Bhamidipati, Gudipati, Mallavarapu, Rukmininatha, Muddukrishna, are indeed dear names, dynamic each in an intensively individual way. Some of these have no connection with the Samiti. Others claim to be connected with this brotherhood and share in its glory. The Samiti always welcomed new entrants into its fold with open arms. Wherever there is a ray of genius visible, there the Sahiti Samiti lives today. And then there are other remarkable literary artists who owe no allegiance to anybody or anything, perhaps not even to themselves.

This period is marked by the rise of many monthly journals exclusively devoted to literature—*Sahiti*, *Sakhi*, *Sarada*, *Sujata*, *Jayanti*, *Bharati*, *Udayini*, *Pratibha*,—a list from which have proceeded entrancingly sweet melodies.

And the number of Granthamalas grew by the score. In each of them were published books dealing with literature and learning.

We have now come to our own day in our survey. Most of the contemporary literary artists are personally known to the present writer and are much attached to him. To pick out names from amongst them for mention would be to court abuse and unpopularity among friends. At the same time, it would be unjust and invidious not to make special mention of those about whose merit there can be and never have been two opinions. Of these R. V. M. G. Rama Rao Bahadur, the talented Yuvaraja of Pithapuram, merits separate recognition. His poems, plays and prose writings are characterized by great lyrical beauty and are suffused with thought all his own. They breathe sincerity and freedom untrammelled and unalloyed. By his many works already published, the Yuvaraja

has already assured for himself an abiding and endearing place in the hearts of the lovers of art and literature.

Young poets of Rayalasima also cannot be by-passed, especially Puttaparti, Sampat and Belluri. Puttaparti with his *Penugonda Lakshmi* and *Shaji* is already well known. He is a young man with great ambition, a sincere student and open to new influences. He is biding his time to get recognition as the author of a great poem. Sampat is known for his sweetness and light. His many short poems already published are preludes to his being regarded as a poet to be reckoned with. Belluri has a poetic genius which is languishing for want of encouragement.

Two great names are reserved to the last for particularly special treatment. They are the twin poets of Proddatur in the Cuddapah District. But each of them has grown so tall in stature and individuality that they merit separate mention. Before them, everywhere in the Telugu country the effort for poetic achievement had been spasmodic, sporadic and confined mostly to the production of short poems, though of great excellence. There was generally a want of ambition to vie with the great masters of the earlier ages for the achievement of something colossal, great and grand. Till some time past, it looked as though the age of ambitious achievement would not recur. This fear has been falsified by these two poets. Gadiyaram Venkata Sesha Sastri of Proddatur, Cuddapah District, is the proud author of *Siva Bharatamu*, a work which next to the *Mahabharata* of Tikkana of seven centuries ago stands in volume, poetic excellence and scope as the greatest living monument of the present age and of the ages that have preceded it. If the *Mahabharata* is the story of heroes who have receded into the hoary past, the *Siva Bharatamu* is the story of modern Bharatavarsha and of the master of the present Bharatavarsha, namely Shivaji the great, who established the great Maratha empire as a bulwark against alien culture and alien domination. Parallels in incident and treatment can be found in plenty between the two great works. This achievement of Sesha Sastri has taken Telugu literature back to the eminent heights from which it had its source. The Andhras have rightly placed the *Kaviganda penderamu*, the envied golden anklet, on his foot in apprecia-

tion of the service done by him to Telugu poesy.

The other great work is the *Rana Pratapasimha Charitram* by the other great poet hailing from the same place. It is an equally great poem dealing with the history of Pratap Singh, the Rajput king, who for many years refused to submit to Muslim rule. The work is conceived in an equally high key and contains much excellent poetic fancy, though lacking in the unity that characterizes the work of his brother poet of Proddatur. These two works stand by themselves apart from the rest of present day literature and far above the reach of criticism except of an admiring and appreciative nature. They presage the coming into existence of Telugu literature as the leading literature of the world. In the meanwhile, the wheels move on ceaselessly to their goal, which is ever in process of being reached.

## 16. URDU

By RASHID AHMED SIDDIQI

Prof. Rashid Ahmed Siddiqi, who heads the Department of Urdu at the Aligarh Muslim University, is the author, editor and translator of a number of Urdu works, ranging from history to literary criticism.

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When Urdu Literature took to the turbulent waters of the Twentieth Century, it was not on its maiden voyage ; it had a tradition of nearly three hundred years of literary cruise behind it. Diverted though it was here and there by currents and cross-currents of History, it had touched many a distant shore and seen many a stalwart mariner. Modern Urdu literature may be said, however, to begin with the "Mutiny" of 1857.

The "Mutiny" was not brought about by Literature, but it shook all literary men. It purged what it could not stifle and stifled what it could not purge. It dazzled and disillusioned but it also opened up new vistas. It marked the final break down of decadent Oriental feudalism, and saw the triumph of Western capitalism. It brought about a general sense of frustration in the older people, and let loose a flood of new ideas as to the significance of life and literature, which the younger generation, led by Sir Syed, readily welcomed and imbibed.

These changes were fundamental and affected the country as a whole. The entire national activity of this period centred round Delhi, the Capital ; and North India, which was the cradle of Urdu, began to give the lead in every direction of social and political activity. Fortunately enough, royal patronage as well as its immense popularity had made Urdu both dignified and universal. Institutions like the

‘Mushaira’ had popularised Urdu poetry and literature. The man in the street in Delhi and Lucknow cared about his language and accent, and lines from literary masters were freely quoted in ordinary conversation. This had a tremendous effect on the development of Urdu: it became a literary reed into which all ideas were blown into poetry. There is as much literature in the records of the political controversy of this period, or in the journalistic breeze of *Oudh Punch* as in “Absalom and Achitophel” and “The Rape of the Lock.”

Thus it was that Urdu had come to the forefront welcoming and mirroring every progressive tendency and providing every shade of thought and opinion, the best and most felicitous medium of defence and elucidation. Foremost among these was the Western way of life and thought which enchanted those who came in contact with it. Urdu Literature, however, was affected by it rather late, as its centres Delhi and Lucknow were far removed from the coastal regions where impact with the West was first made. Slow but sure, however, the breath of fresh air came, and gave new life to Urdu Literature.

Sir Syed, founder of the Aligarh Movement, was the first to sense which way the wind was blowing. He gave a rude shock to orthodoxy. Before him, the treasure house of Urdu contained mostly gems of poetry; prose was still artificial, halting and heavy, barring Ghalib’s letters and the books written under the influence of the Fort William and the Delhi Colleges. The language had reached a high degree of technical perfection. It was helped by the fusion of two cultures—the Indian and the Iranian. In its early stages when it was blessed by the helping hand of the Sufis, it was Indian and popular, but gradually it had become exclusive, polished and high-brow: it looked on the problems of the world with indifference and thrived on sophistry and conceits.

Sir Syed saw all this: he saw that the West had triumphed over the East, but that Oriental scholars still kept dancing on a floor that was crumbling away. He stretched a hand of welcome to the West, he talked of Science, Nature, Rationalism and Civilization. He ushered in a new era. He gave a simple style to Urdu prose and created a new class of readers. He related the language to the changing conditions

of life. In the sunshine of his personality, the genius of Hali, Shibli and Nazir Ahmed blossomed forth to announce the birth of Modern Urdu Literature. The centre of gravitation shifted from Delhi and Lucknow to Aligarh. Henceforth all eyes were rivetted on the literary activities initiated and sponsored by Aligarh men. Broadly speaking these men have since pioneered all the literary experiments and movements in Urdu.

With the dawn of the 20th century came a new movement. Hali's poetry was first ridiculed by the traditionalists but its "fine majesty of simple lines," its broad appeal, its realistic outlook, its message of hope, its urge for a new moral greatness, gradually penetrated the thick incense of love songs. It created a following and set a fashion. Ismail made the homely and the drab beautiful. Akbar began to preach, though his message and method were both different. Our poets who had till now been sadly oblivious of the beauty of Nature suddenly discovered her wealth and charm. A new wave of nationalism swayed them. *Makhzan*, started by Sh. Abdul Qadir, gave the leadership to a new class, *viz.*, the younger generation influenced and dominated by the West. Iqbal sang first of India and then of Islam before talking about the Universe. But his manly voice was always heard and found many an echo, till it filled the whole atmosphere.

Just before the cataclysm of the First Great War, Urdu literature had developed on certain well marked lines. Hali's influence was noticeable in poetry; it had made Iqbal possible. Hali was modern, Shibli looked back to the past and translated it in terms of today. But Shibli paved the way for Abul Kalam Azad, Syed Sulaiman Nadvi and Mohammad Ali. The intellectuals who were first nourished in the traditions of Sir Syed were gradually drawn towards Shibli. The West gave them a new orientation. Prose in this period was either learned, rhetorical and fiery, as in the hands of Abul Kalam, or literary, graceful and haunting, as with Sajjad Hyder and Qazi Abdul Ghaffar, but it was neither simple nor flexible. Politics, *Adab-e-Latif (Belles Letters)* and a re-interpretation of the past are the chief themes of this era.

Side by side with the new movement for progress, social

change and Westernization, there was a reactionary movement for staying the historical process. Akbar in a way headed this movement. He was an accomplished poet, well skilled in his art. He had a fine sense of humour and an unparalleled command over language. Though his satire could not restrain the new forces, it certainly helped by exposing their superficial character. Being anti-Western and confidently Oriental, it fed national pride by glorying in its own greatness. It helped Iqbal to come back to the East, after his sojourn with the Western masters.

The Great War brought new hopes and new frustrations in its wake. India had hopefully participated in the war effort, but she had to suffer the humiliations of the Rowlatt Act, and the Jallianwalla Bagh, Martial Law and firing. This gave a rude shock to the placid atmosphere in the country. Iqbal first touched upon the significance of the Russian revolution in his *Khizre-e-Rah*. The war made the world smaller. It made India united in a demand for independence and self-determination. The growth of Adab-e-Latif was checked. Prem Chand, who had been writing sentimental stories about rural life, suddenly discovered the tragedy that was India and began to depict it. He was a reformer and an idealist. He "romanticized, emotionalized, philosophized and in the end etherealized" village life. But gradually his vision widened and his knowledge of human nature deepened. The Khilafat and Swaraj movements broadened the literary horizon and swept away the miniature paintings and drawing-room manners of Adab-e-Latif writers. They also checked the growing tendency to extreme ornamentation and made Hali's following larger. They brought into existence a band of new critics and poets, Western in outlook but also definitely Oriental in a sense. Azmat-ullah Khan tried to give a death-blow to the *Ghaz'l*, Bijnori interpreted Ghalib, and criticism began to be taken up as a serious study.

From 1922 to 1935, when Iqbal was occupied for the most part with writing his classic poems in Persian, a change had been quietly taking place in the realm of Urdu Literature. Songs, hymns and lyrics influenced by Hindi came into vogue. Children's literature developed. Western fiction,

especially French and Russian, was available in translation. Prem Chand was becoming more and more a realist. Although essentially a short-story writer, he had written some great novels. Romanticism had found a new votary in Josh. It was the coming of age of a new generation who, full of hope and idealism, thought lightly of the sterner realities of life. It did good to literature in several ways. All the writers were athirst for ideas; they absorbed and assimilated from East and West. Translations from Hindi, Sanskrit, Bengali and Gujarati began to make their appearance. The new generation acquired confidence and hoped to make the world a better and happier place to live in. There was no dearth of creative talent. The Osmania University showed that even the highest branch of knowledge could be successfully taught through Urdu. Criticism dressed in Western finery was mostly superficial and dogmatic. But the fact that it began to talk in terms of rules, that it envisaged a view of life and of literature, and demanded certain exacting standards, had a salutary effect.

It is now time to review the traditional school in poetry and prose, which is by no means inconsiderable. With the growing popularity of Hali and Iqbal, *Ghaz'l*<sup>1</sup> had a serious rival in *Naz'm*,<sup>2</sup> but it was not prepared to concede ground so easily. The tradition of Dagh and Ameer gradually lost vogue; Ghalib's popularity increased, so much so that Lucknow which had long revelled in mere felicity of phrase and technical skill began to see and think differently. The poetic diction which had served so well for a long time was suddenly found to be lifeless and outworn. Freshness, originality and spontaneity gradually asserted themselves and *Ghaz'l* began to look down on mere deftness of expression or use of artifice. Meer, the great soul-stirring master, who had been put on a pedestal and forgotten by literary circles, was again brought down to earth. *Ghaz'l* became more a study of human nature than a love song. The most dominant rôle in this domain is that of Hasrat. He knew all the masters and could blend all the well-known shades into a new pattern. He also sang

<sup>1</sup> A number of independent couplets having the same rhyme scheme.

<sup>2</sup> A poem written throughout on a single theme,

of love, but with him love was not a mere sensual affair. It had a purifying and ennobling influence also. It was passionate, fiery, even erotic. But it was also human, living and natural. It spoke of the body's rapture ; it was soft with the response of the beloved ; it had a peace and serenity all its own. Hasrat's influence on the traditional Ghaz'l was very wholesome. It prolonged its life ; it made the Ghaz'l lighter, softer and simpler. Hasrat, Fani, Asghar and Jigar are some of the leading traditional Ghaz'l writers. Fani's pessimism, though mostly individualistic, is also the anguished cry of an age. Asghar tries to escape into the dim light above ; only Jigar is content to belong to this earth. He has the heart and mind of an adolescent who is constantly repeating to himself " For ever will I love and she be fair. "

The traditionalists in prose went on writing in a labour-ed, learned style. Their influence became less till by 1930 the new generation finally emerged triumphant. Half-and Prem Chand in prose, and Iqbal and Josh ( with the songsters of the thirties ) in poetry, were the most influential figures. There was amongst them much energy, fairly wide-spread creative effort, and a liberal sprinkling of idealism. Urdu Literature became more Indian, more modern, and more alive ; it definitely freed itself from the past. But it was still fond of the grand and the sublime. Rhetoric passed for good style ; " sound and fury " signified a good deal. It has been said about Prem Chand's novels that they give us a cross-section of the Indian struggle for independence. This is their strength as well as their weakness. They are closely related to life and mirror its turbulent character, but their realism is that of a photographer, not that of an artist. They preach too much and too loudly. The characters are like grown-up boys ; they change too suddenly and cry too often. And there is too much insistence on sacrifice, martyrdom and hero-worship. The propagandist in Prem Chand always triumphs over the artist.

The last twelve or fifteen years have brought about another revolutionary change. Facilities in printing have made the book trade flourishing, a reading public has gradually sprung up, not very critical, but fairly intelligent and not to be taken in too easily. Iqbal's last three volumes in

Urdu, especially *Bal-i-Jabreel*, were epoch-making. Iqbal had grown to his full stature. W. C. Smith, in his *Modern Islam in India*, ably sums up Iqbal's contribution. He rightly points out that Iqbal's influence is felt both by progressive and reactionary circles. But Iqbal is really the pioneer of what has now come to stay as the Progressive Movement in Urdu. Long before 1935 Iqbal had emphasized action, self-fulfilment, and personality. The younger generation, however, bereft of his sturdy faith and deep idealism, began gradually to pick holes in his philosophy. They had passed through the smoke and fire of the Second World War, Iqbal had not. He was too much occupied with gazing at the stars and too little concerned with the sordid realities of life.

The most important product of the literary activity of the last twelve or fifteen years is the Progressive Movement. Progressive Writing must be distinguished from New Writing. There is a good deal of Progressive Writing in the nineteenth century literature while in the New Writing of today there is much perverse, crude, superficial, vague and obscure jargon. Progressive writing is influenced mostly by the West, but as there is a similarly strong movement in other Indian literatures, it has also benefited from them. It has produced good work all round, but mainly in the way of poetry, short stories and criticism. It has encouraged experiments in new forms and new technique. Blank-verse was first tried by veterans like Sharar, Ismail, and Naz'm Tabatabai, but it received an impetus through this movement and paved the way for Free Verse. Free verse has become quite popular, but has yet to produce a really first-rate poet. The most burning topic in literary circles today is that of the need of Free Verse and its use in Urdu which has a highly developed rhyme-scheme.

The short story has developed remarkably in Urdu and can hold its own with other Indian short stories. It has shed romanticism and acquired technical skill. Bedi, Krishna Chandra Akhtar, Ansari and a host of other young writers have made the short story a mirror of our life and literature. They include brilliant cross-sections, living sketches, searching analyses, and vivid portraits of the drama that is India. But the popularity of the short story, the neglect of the

novel and the absence of good drama shows that there is something lacking. It may be lack of constructive thinking, or sustained flight, or deep and abiding knowledge. The modern mind thinks and works in flashes. It is meteoric, brilliant and destructive. It has borrowed from Freud, Marx, Lawrence, Joyce and many others. Most of the borrowings have been thoughtless. But it has certainly widened our mental horizon, and now with the translations of Chinese, Russian and American masters it has enriched our literature. Criticism has taken two main directions. Either it is purposive, progressive and sweeping, or æsthetic, high-brow and exacting. But it has begun to ask questions and to attempt to answer them. Criticism has yet to produce another Hali. It has been an occasional delight with many, but the single-minded work of only a few. It still has to be creative, tolerant and impartial. It has yet to grow.

The Second World War has just ended and it is not yet possible to judge fully its effect on writers and readers. There were many cries of revolution and blood and tears; there will be many more. But the war has made men sober, and they are hardly taken in by mere slogans. Revolution, the Masses, and Social Justice, still find a responsive chord in men's hearts and they will continue to do so, but it is no longer possible for literary quacks to make a reputation overnight by talking about these. Cynicism, cleverness, propaganda and borrowed ideas, came in extremely handy in the last few years, but none can sustain his reputation merely on them now.

There has been quite a pulling down of old standards, but new ones have yet to be evolved. The fight between the new and the old is still being bitterly fought, but the issue has never been in doubt. The controversy now is not about art for art's sake or for life's sake but about Free Verse, Symbolism, and Eastern and Western canons of judgment. The contact with the people and their needs and problems, though neither very close nor very real, is nevertheless a great thing. Romanticism seems to have died a natural death. War, suffering and the Bengal famine, though not often tackled as literary subjects, have nevertheless moulded people's thoughts. The poetic manner seems to have suffered

a change. It is no longer full-throated, exuberant and joyful. Something is wrong with it. It may be dyspepsia, disillusionment, or just bad nerves. But prose has taken gigantic strides. It is direct, manly and eloquent, with a wealth of ideas. It has been greatly helped by translations and original works in all branches of knowledge. The urge to be free and to make freedom worth while is very strong in India today, but the present war seems to have ended with no immediate prospect of freedom for us, and so literature is in for another period of disillusionment, anger and frustration.



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